

THE N.A. Way[®]

M A G A Z I N E

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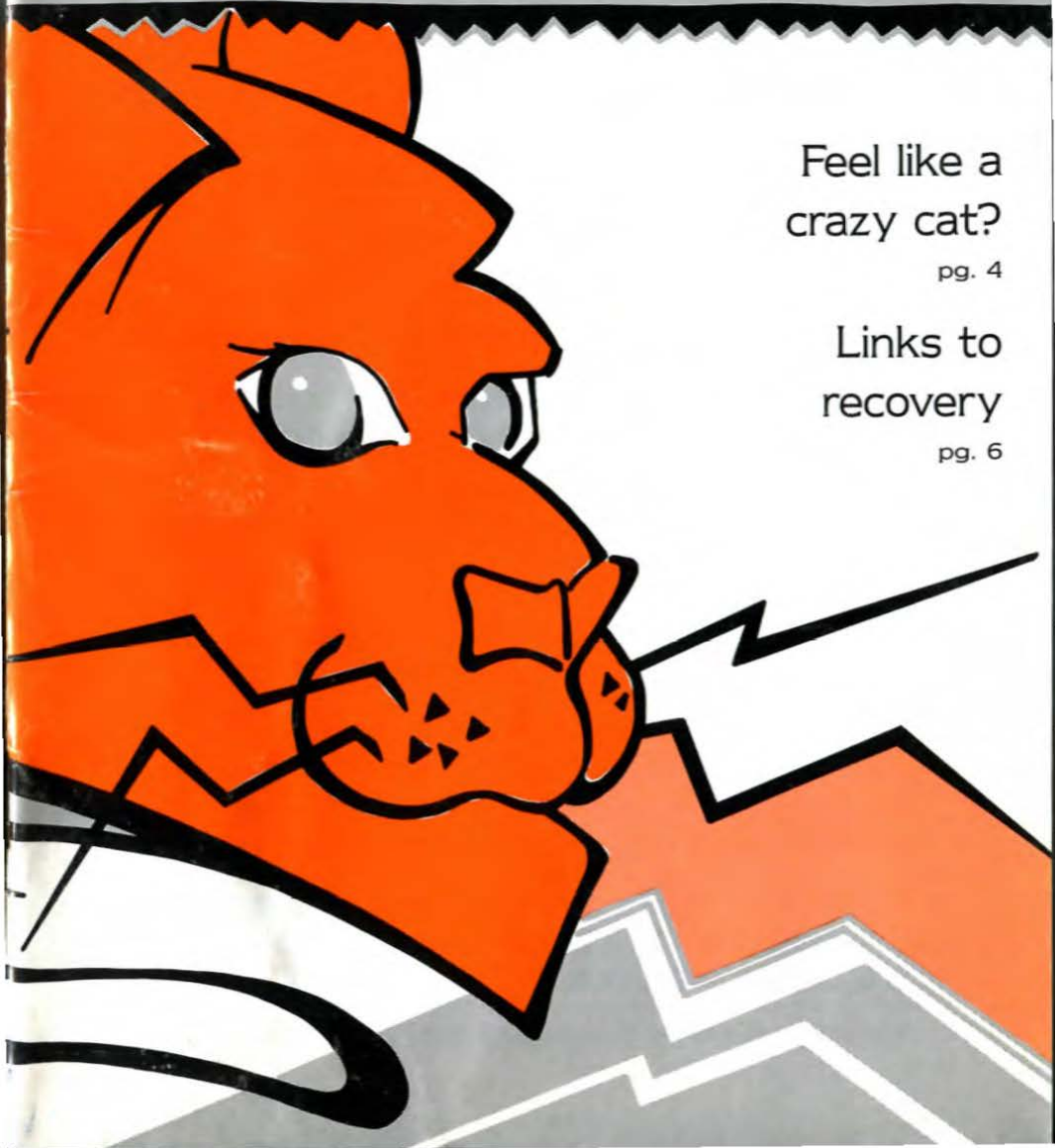
\$2.25 Canadian

Feel like a
crazy cat?

pg. 4

Links to
recovery

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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[®] MAGAZINE

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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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Anybody can!

Narcotics Anonymous has done for me what nothing had ever done for me—it has turned my life around and given me a freedom I never knew existed.

After spending seven years in state prisons, I decided to pick up drugs for the first time; I was thirty years old. From the first minute I picked up, my life became a raging avalanche. I took advantage of everything and everyone. I manipulated, lied, cheated, robbed, hurt and abused people. Like any addict, I did whatever I had to do to get my drug of choice—I went to any lengths.

My parole officer took me off the streets in February 1987—"for my

own good," he said. It was obvious to everyone how bad I had begun to look and act. They sent me back to prison to finish up the remaining nine months of my original sentence. It was there, serving out that parole violation that I first heard the message of Narcotics Anonymous.

On October 27, I left the prison and made my first outside N.A. meeting. However, I didn't stick around very long. In fact, I became a "chronic relapser" until I hit my bottom in September 1988. I won't go into detail, except to say that it was a hell of a bottom for me.

I did things that I swore I would never do, no matter how bad things got. I was, at that point, homeless. I was living in the streets and in crack houses. My wife had gotten an order of protection against me. I had taken everything that was worth anything in our apartment and sold it. I had abused her emotionally and mentally to the point where she refused to have anything to do with me. How

could I blame her? I was totally in the grips of my disease. I didn't care. I just wanted to die out there.

Somewhere in the midst of all that insanity, I became sick and tired of being sick and tired. I realized I did not want to live the way I was living anymore. When that realization came, I saw a light at the end of the long, dark tunnel I'd been trapped in. I made the phone call that changed my life.

Once I made it back to the "rooms," it was like I was on a mission from God or something. I went to any lengths for my recovery. I took all the suggestions, made commitments, got involved, and made some real friends. I became a follower instead of the so-called leader I always thought I was. I found out for the first time that I didn't know it all, and that I didn't have all the answers.

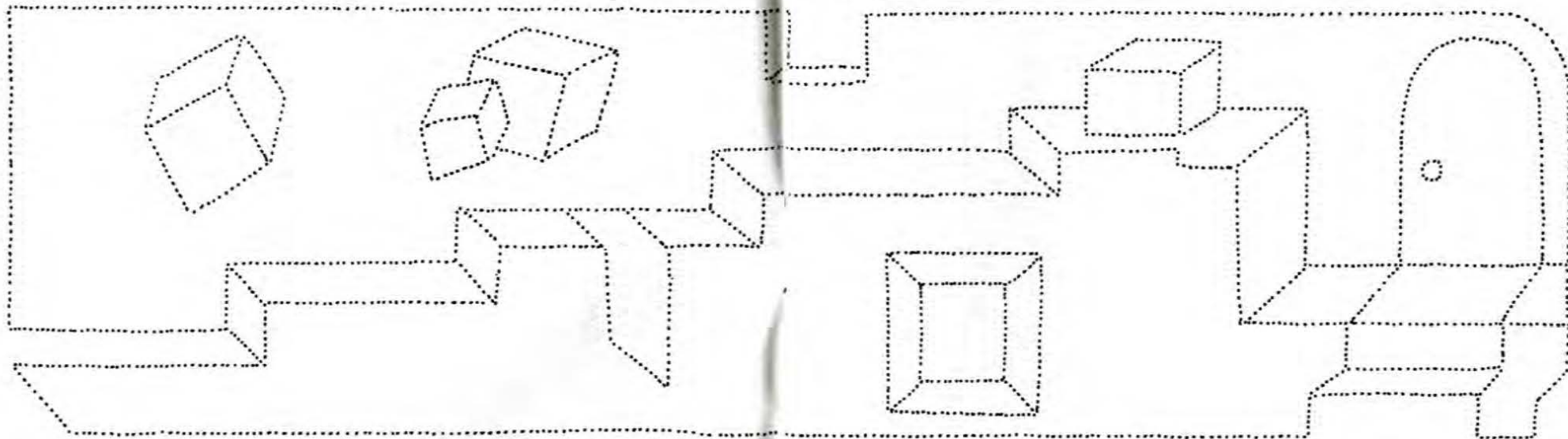
What a revelation that was! My way was always the wrong way—I always took all the short cuts and all the bumpy roads, and it got me nowhere but places like Attica, Sing Sing, nut

houses, crack houses, and homelessness.

Once I let my sponsor and my support group show me the N.A. way, things began to happen for me. My wife took me back in and we began a new relationship—a *real* relationship. I've made some really great friends along the way, and for the first time I really feel some growth. I have things inside of me that money can't buy. For the first time in my entire life, I am living a real life. But most important of all, I feel a freedom today I had never known existed. You cannot compare the freedom I felt after leaving prison to the freedom I feel today. And that is just one of the many miracles of the program.

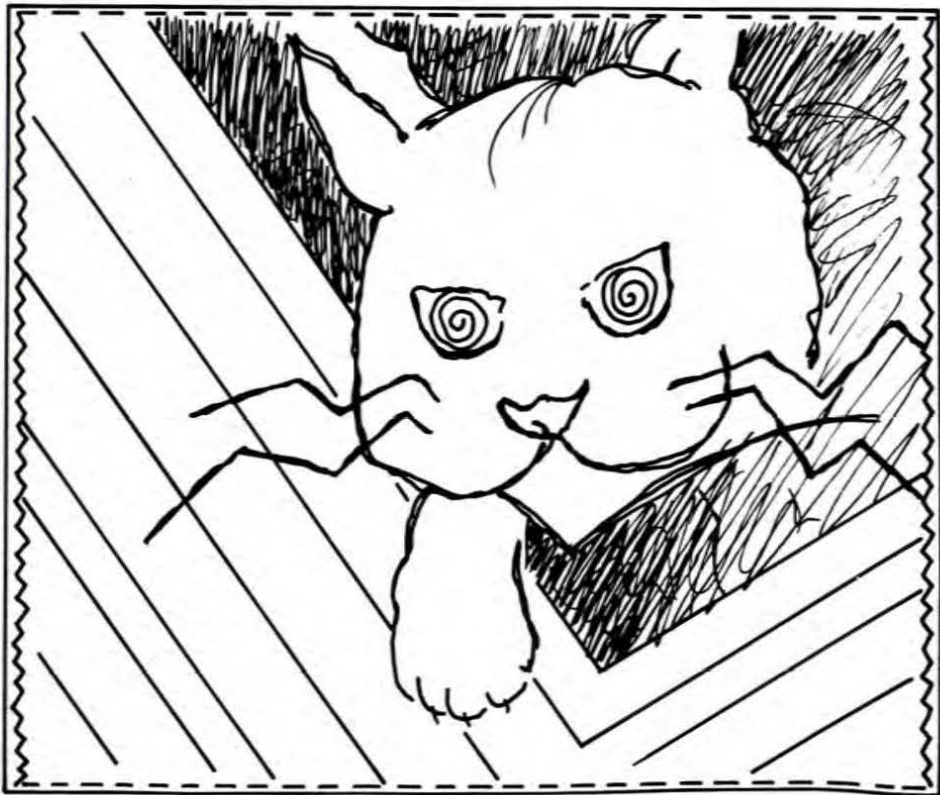
I just recently celebrated my first year clean, and I have a lot of gratitude in my life today. I owe everything I have, inside and out, to the fellowship of N.A. *If I can get clean, anybody can!*

S.K., New York



Crazy cat

It was 4:30 in the morning. Our cat woke me up, terrified of an electrical storm. He wouldn't be comforted and was trying to wake up my exhausted father, so I locked the poor thing out in the garage. Bill, normally a fiercely independent tom, always carries on



that way when he gets left inside overnight. But tonight was different. He didn't want to go back out. Neither did he want to stay in. He didn't really know what he wanted. He just wanted to stop hurting.

Sound familiar? That crazy cat was telling my story. When I had finally been desperate enough to be willing to cry for help, I had tucked my tail between my legs and crawled through the back door of the last house on the block—Narcotics Anonymous. That meeting room had been the last place I wanted to be, but I had nowhere else to go. I had tried everything else, but the hurting just wouldn't stop. My pride had kept me from asking for help.

But in the end, my pain had far outweighed my pride. I hadn't wanted to go in; neither had I wanted to stay out.

Two and a half years ago, I had never even heard of N.A. Random urinalysis at work had encouraged me to substitute the drug alcohol for my true chemical love. But—*surprise!*—I got into just as much trouble with the booze as before.

My uncle had been in Alcoholics Anonymous. I had heard they had coffee there, and the program had helped my drunken uncle. That's all I knew at the time—except that I desperately needed help. I didn't realize I was actually dying. I only knew it *felt* that way.

They took me in and loved me—as much as I would let them. I remained somewhat aloof from them, but somehow I managed to put together thirty days. I was so excited, I decided to celebrate by smoking a joint. I told my conscience, "You didn't *drink* marijuana, and you only agreed to stop drinking. Besides, you earned the right, and it was only that once..."

Within a week, I was standing on the toilet seat, blowing smoke into the exhaust fan at six in the morning before heading for work. After work, I would go to a meeting.

After I had discovered Narcotics Anonymous and could no longer lean on the ridiculous justification that you "don't drink pot," the wife of a friend in N.A. confided that her husband was still "slipping around." She asked me if I didn't think he was being a hypocrite to use and then go to

meetings. I told her it was better than him using and then *not* going to meetings. I told her how I had done the same thing early on.

In no way was I saying it's okay to use. It is never okay for an addict to use, but once the addict has used, what then? Should he stay away until he's "well" again? Should he come to us for help, or should he first get his act together, then join our elite ranks when he no longer *needs* help?

If you had imposed this restriction on me, I'd probably be dead today, or worse. But you didn't turn me away. I kept coming back, just like you said—sometimes clean, sometimes dirty—but either way, I kept coming back, and you always welcomed me. I'm clean today because of your unconditional love.

Even today I don't always know what I want. I don't want to be an addict, but I am. I don't always want to be in, but neither do I want to go back out. I still just want to stop hurting, but life happens, and sometimes it hurts.

You've never turned me away, even when I've been just as impossible as my crazy cat was this morning. Sometimes you've had to "put me in the garage," but you've always loved me. You've never forgotten that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. You've never forgotten that our fellowship exists to help the addict who still suffers. You've taught me by your example to love the *using* addict, too.

T.C., Rhode Island

Links to recovery



Breathing deeply, I gulped in the fresh breeze coming off the ocean and the scent of the freshly-mowed lawn, and then lifted my face to the warm afternoon sunshine. Breaking my thoughts from the tranquil surroundings, I calmly addressed my ball on the tee.

Glancing back and forth between the recently manicured fairway and the tiny golf ball at my feet, I conjured visions of my ball rocketing off the

tee, imagining how it would feel to really whack the ball with the "sweet spot" of my club. I could almost hear the *crack* as I envisioned my ball taking off, appearing to gain speed as it flew ever so slightly upward and then back down toward the flag stick. I painted a picture of the ball rolling right up onto the green.

Then I thought to myself, "I'm going to birdie this hole." I extended that thought, projecting visions of par for the entire round of golf, which would be a personal-best score for me. I calculated how a round of par golf would lower my handicap, reducing my overall scoring average.

Then I proceeded to slice the ball almost perpendicular to its intended direction of travel, and uttered a long stream of expletives as I watched it bounce ever so gracefully into a lake. Ducks began to swim frantically for their lives as I cursed at the top of my lungs. Any semblance of the serenity I had enjoyed just minutes earlier was gone. The environment around me was as tranquil as ever, but I had sabotaged my own serenity by getting too far ahead of the game.

In some ways, this all-too-familiar experience reminds me of my recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Just as I need to play my golf game one stroke at a time, I must take my program one day at a time. When I have one eye on today and one eye on tomorrow, it's like having one eye on the golf ball and one eye on the eighteenth fairway.

On the other hand, if I keep my attention focused during my golf game on each swing of the club, my game becomes a pleasant experience. Any

one good shot can make my day when I look at that shot by itself, without diluting the experience by worrying about all the potential difficulty lying in the next shot, the next fairway, or the next round of golf.

In the context of the N.A. program, I am able to live in relative emotional comfort if I stay focused on the "one-day-at-a-time" concept. When I emphasize using the tools of the program to cope with whatever challenge or adversity life has in store for me today, I am certain to make it until bed time without using any drugs. But when I start looking down the road, worrying about my career, stressing out over my relationship, or trying to comprehend the idea of staying clean the rest of my life, my emotional comfort turns into fear, panic, doubt, self-loathing, and a million other uncomfortable feelings.

In my golf game, a funny thing can happen if I play the game one stroke at a time. All of a sudden, I could find myself scoring par on each individual hole. Next, my overall score could suddenly hover around par. After a while, my handicap could come way down, and I would become a more accomplished player of the game.

In my program of recovery, if I continue to deal with things one day at a time and work one step at a time, I continue to stay clean. If I work hard each day, my career progresses nicely. My relationships grow in a positive direction when I work at them, too, a day at a time. Overall, my life in general becomes a more pleasant experience when I stay focused on the present.

To lose that serenity, all I have to do is take my focus off of today and start looking down the road—and I do this quite frequently. I'll be sitting in today, all nice and comfortable, and think that I can start managing and controlling my life again, planning and conniving my future. The result is that all my character defects come screaming out, making my life and the lives of those around me miserable.

The end result is that, if I don't take this game one stroke at a time, I end up fishing around in a slimy lake looking for a tiny ball while ducks flee desperately from my fury.

P.R., California



Takin' a bath

Prison. December 6, 1986. Inmate lying in a bathtub filled with water. One arm cocked back, the palm of his hand supporting the rear of his head. In the other hand was a syringe filled with methamphetamine. He could see the target of his concentrated stare reflected in the mirror propped up on the side of the tub. An expert marksman, he took aim and directed the point of the needle into the vein that lay in the center of his left armpit.

That was only one moment in the twenty-one years of my drug use.

To say I wanted to stop using was one thing; actually doing it was quite another. From the first day, my head reeled in confusion. How do I live and not use drugs? Is it possible? Can I do it?

Thoughts were coming and going so quickly, I felt my head was going to burst from the pressure. Irritability was no longer a word—it was a way of life. To focus my attention on any one subject for more than a few seconds was impossible. I used anger to

mask my fear. At times, suicide seemed to be the only possible solution.

Somehow, through the chaos, I managed to maintain a determination to change. I began praying daily. I spent so much time on my knees, I developed callouses.

Experiencing my feelings for the first time in many years was scary. My mind was so accustomed to feeling pain and misery that I became afraid when I felt joy or happiness. Ironically, I was encountering a sense of distorted security in familiar pain. Slowly, I began to understand the difference between my feelings and my thoughts.

Then I heard about some men and women who had once used drugs but had somehow stopped. They called themselves Narcotics Anonymous. They said they did not deal with addiction; they dealt with recovery. I began hanging around and listening to them speak of how they had changed their lives completely around.

Gradually, I began to accept what had happened in my life, and forgave myself for past mistakes. I could actually make it through a day without drugs.

I shared with other drug addicts about my life in hope that they, too, could find a better way. Empathy for others helped me to understand the world around me. I became aware that to sustain a recovery from addiction I had to give freely what was freely given to me.

My life is miraculous. I no longer fight the obsession of drugs on a daily basis. Since making my first Narcot-

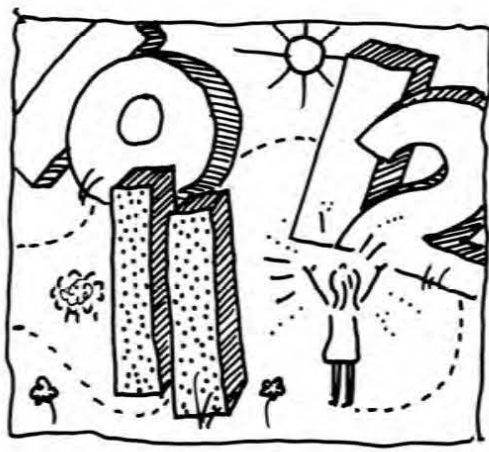
ics Anonymous meeting, my life has turned 180 degrees. Once, I spent every waking hour consumed with thoughts of getting and using drugs. Now, I've learned how to enjoy life. I go to school full time. I work a full time job, attend N.A. meetings, and accomplish the never-ending homework each night. Though my life has

changed considerably, I haven't forgotten what those people taught me in the beginning: to ask God in the morning to help me to stay straight, and to thank Him at night for helping me stay clean.

Recovery. It's like takin' a bath—you gotta do it every day to stay clean.

T.M., Pennsylvania





Return to myself

It's a windy night. I can hear the water just outside my window. To have a window, let alone with water just outside, truly amazes me. One of my favorite sayings since I've been in recovery has been, "I never cease to be amazed."

In God's time, all things are made possible. I've wanted to write for a long time. I sincerely hope that this is just the beginning of another dream come true. I have no reason to believe that it is not.

I've always been a dreamer. I've always known that I've had it in me to fulfill those dreams. Yet, I continually chose to turn my back on the

talents that were freely given to me. I chose sloth, envy, and instant gratification instead of energy, love, and hard work. For my choices, I was paid in kind. Turned to fat, self-hate, and doubt, the best I could do was to keep a "buzz."

Such a waste, those years of using. By the time I was eighteen, I'd already had enough horror to qualify for N.A. Nightmares were more enjoyable than my waking hours. My zest for life, my plans and goals were all but faint glimmers, seeming to come from someone else; perhaps a character in a book I'd read or someone I'd shared an intense conversation with. Fourteen more years of using put the lid on that person, leaving no trace of her existence.

But a chain of events shook me to my bones and reawakened that young woman in me, full of hope and awe. The doors of Narcotics Anonymous opened and I walked through. Though wide-eyed and scared, I stayed, even more fearful to turn around and leave. Soon, memories of life came flooding back, and I quickly wanted to make up for lost time.

But like a person who has been bed-ridden for years, I was weak. Many times I wanted to throw in the towel, frustrated with my handicap, when I couldn't immediately recapture all the vivacity of youth. Now that I understood my mistakes, had diagnosed my disease and found the path of recovery, I believed that all things would be possible whenever I wanted them to be.

The fact is that I cannot recapture the past. The dreams and the talents still remain, but added to that are many hard and painful experiences. The streets, the bars, and the people of my using days are a part of me. In addition, I still have a disease that came close to destroying every shred of evidence that life existed in this body. Given half a chance, it is ever ready to finish the job.

Today, in retrospect, I can actually see that some of those earliest dreams have come true. I'm realizing that I've just taken a different road to get there. My life is no longer my own—in the Third Step, I freely gave it to God. The remaining nine steps lead

me to a higher purpose: a simple, spiritual existence that unifies and utilizes *all* the aspects of my character.

Gradually, I am learning this concept. My personal aspirations are beginning to fit comfortably with service to others. Patience and gratitude are replacing self-centered regret and a pre-occupation with "me and mine." As grace affords me more sanity, I am learning to recognize and quiet the voice of addiction as it reveals itself through selfish motives and desires. By shelving these seemingly burning desires, I find peace in our fellowship, balance throughout the day, and a steady step as I relearn to walk.

Then one day I sit down, pen in hand, to write about the miracles that happened so slowly that I hardly noticed. Personal success has been happening all along, and I never had to leave the rooms, give up service positions, or find new friends. Through my higher power—I can have it all!

L.C., Virginia

Addiction on trial

I am a trial lawyer who, by the grace of God and the Fellowship of N.A., is still licensed to practice after a long period of using and lawlessness. My pattern of using drugs was the same as most other addicts. I was bold and brazen enough during my addiction to try to practice my profession. I got and used drugs, and found ways and means to get and use *more* drugs. I encountered many scrapes and close calls, as you may imagine. It still baffles me, even after almost three years of being clean, how I got by. Let me share one such experience.

The federal court system has a well deserved reputation of running a tight ship. Criminally, the feds only go after a very small percentage of offenders, but woe unto those unfortunate souls who are pursued. I was appointed to represent one such person who quickly realized the wisdom of entering a negotiated plea. Having done so, I found myself before the district court judge assuring him that my client's plea was his informed, intelligent, and voluntary choice.

Under normal circumstances, my

ten year old son could have stood in my stead at this kind of hearing. But after a night of using (or was it two nights and a day?), and a little something in the attache case for the road, the task was almost too much for me. I was paranoid of the marshalls, intimidated by the judge, and fearful of being found out by the other lawyers and spectators. I could barely raise my voice to an audible level. I thank God for the desk which I used to support my trembling body and shaking hands.

Today, I still have some apprehensions, but the degree and severity of them are nowhere near the level that they were on that day. Moreover, when I earnestly work the steps and apply the principles of the program to every aspect of my life, I can see the recovery in my life. I am regaining some of the respect that I lost from fellow members of the bar association. My clientele is increasing, and I don't seriously worry from day to day whether my phone is going to be disconnected or my utility service interrupted. I can pay my secretary without the fear of my check bouncing. I feel good about myself, and it's beginning to show.

Today, I know that my peace and serenity are in direct proportion to my honesty, openness, and willingness. From the simple matter of who I have lunch with, to the question of how I present a client's case in court, I am honest with myself. Thanks to N.A., my inclination today is to follow the spiritual path. And for that, I am grateful.

Anonymous



Just for today

Just for today. . . It's so easy for me to get hung up, taking everyone's inventory but my own. Usually, when I'm resentful at someone I use it to keep myself focused on what "they" did to "me." Of course, this hides the real problem—me! I put up walls of anger so I won't feel my own guilt, fears, or insecurities. "Just for Today" reminds me to focus my attention where it will do some good—on me.

My thoughts will be on my recovery. . . When I wake up in the morning, my head is already in the negative. By getting on my knees and saying the "Just for Today," I am reminded to swing my thoughts toward the positive—my recovery.

Living and enjoying life without the use of drugs. . . This reminds me that I have a choice today. Misery is optional. This doesn't mean that every day is going to be great. Things happen, and growth often involves pain, but I don't have to suffer. I need to be reminded that, whether I am happy or miserable today, it's my choice. Happiness is an inside job! I am also reminded that I'm no longer just getting by or existing—I'm in the game. I'm living and enjoying life without the use of drugs.

Just for today, I will have faith. . . Before I came to N.A., my only faith was that the dope would be good "this time," or that my dealer would be back "soon." I lived on self-propulsion, with no need for faith in anyone but me. Today, I have a deep faith in a God of our understanding, in my sponsor, in the Basic Text, in my wife, in those I sponsor, and in my home group. What a world of difference from that self-centered, self-seeking, ego-maniac who walked into his third treatment center some eight years ago.

. . . in someone in N.A. who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery. I believe this is the key to the First Step. If I am not getting direction from someone in N.A., then who is managing my life? *Me!* The First Step tells me my life is none of my business. It is unmanageable by me. That's why I need direction from my sponsor, just for today.

I will have a program. . . This is a program of repetition: keep coming back, just don't use today, work the steps and live. . . I need a daily program of recovery to keep me focused and centered spiritually. The Basic Text tells us that we have a daily reprieve, based on our spiritual maintenance program. I've found that when I let my program go slack—forget to pray, skip reading, don't meditate—my day gets ugly and uncomfortable. When I follow through on my daily maintenance, I start the day with a positive state of mind, and things seem to go better. I don't feel I have to take control too much, and I'm more apt to let go and let God.

I will try to follow it to the best of my ability. . . This reminds me to give myself a break. I believe every one of us is working on our recovery as hard as we can at any given moment in

'This is a program of repetition: keep coming back, just don't use today, work the steps and live. . .'

time. If we are not doing very well, maybe that's the very best we can do at that time. I believe if I could do a better job at recovery, I would.

Just for today, through N.A. It is only through you people that I have the wonderful life I have today, a healthy son, a loving wife, a beautiful home, a job I love, and N.A. friends around the world. It is only through N.A.'s support that I've been able to walk through my fears and procrastinations to become a responsible and productive member of society. I can't, but we can!

I will try to get a better perspective on my life. . . This helps me get my head focused on living in the answer rather than in the problem. They told me when I first came in, "If you live in the problem, the problem increases. If you live in the answer, the problem goes away." I also know that gratitude and self-pity are mutually exclusive. I can't feel grateful and sorry for myself at the same time. Oftentimes I will list those things I have to

be grateful for to get a better perspective on my life.

Just for today, I will be unafraid. When I came to N.A., my life was filled with fear. I was afraid that somebody would want to start a fight with me; I was afraid some guy would try to take my girlfriend from me; I was afraid you wouldn't like me; and on, and on, and on. . . Today, I know that fear is lack of faith and faith is lack of fear. Today, I am a secure person; I know the world isn't out to get me, and that my higher power will give me and my family everything we need. I have wanted for nothing in recovery that I truly needed. I am at peace today with myself and with the world around me because N.A. has given me a firm foundation to stand on.

My thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using, and who have found a new way of life. . . So many times in recovery I have said, "God, I can't do this. . . I can't make amends to him. . . I can't stay abstinent from sex another day. . . I can't trust God. . . the fear is overwhelming. . ." Then I remember that somebody in N.A. was sharing at the meeting that they were doing it too, that they were scared but walked through the fear and made it to the other side, so go ahead and take that next step. The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel! "So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear."

Anonymous

The key to life

When I had about ninety days, my first sponsor told me, "The steps are the key to life." Of course, at the time, I had no idea what he meant, nor did I care very much. Our Twelve Steps are very simple but, being a good addict, I complicated them as much as anyone. It's quite a different story today.

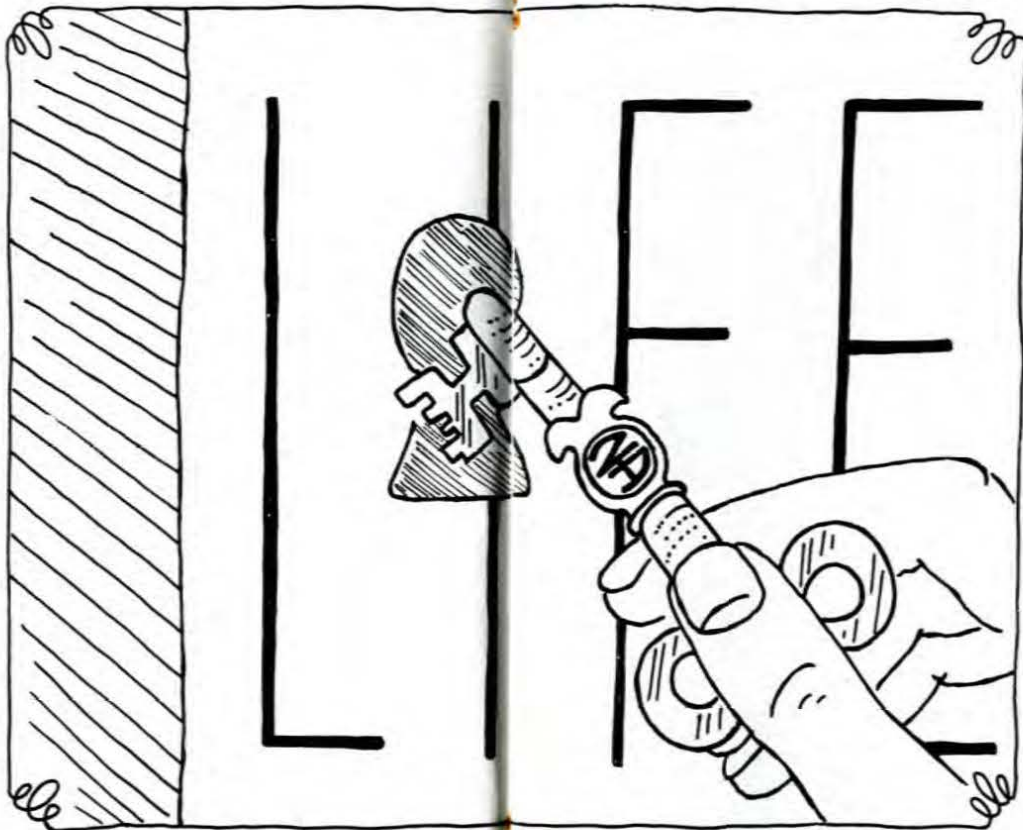
I used to hear people in step meetings talking about working a particular step and being stuck on it; again, I couldn't fathom what they meant. Here, I believe, is where a sponsor and other recovering people who have worked the steps can help. Don't be afraid to ask questions or to say, "I don't understand."

Comprehension of the steps, as with all good things in life, takes time. I believe we can apply our Twelve Steps to *anything* in life. I am in the process of applying them to smoking, and I'm starting, as I did with my drug addiction, with Step One. I believe that to be the most important step. Without it, the other eleven are useless.

I surrendered, admitted powerlessness, looked at how unmanageable my life was, and knew in my heart I could not pick up that first drug. I knew where it led me. If every time I ate chicken I broke out in a rash, I simply would not eat chicken. Of

course, drug addiction is a much stronger compulsion; but that's how I looked at it, and it seemed reasonable to me.

In the Second and Third Steps, I got in touch with a power greater than myself. I simply came to believe that God was going to take care of me and give me what I needed. If I could just try to do the right thing, I would be



putting myself in his hands. I did the footwork, and left the results to him. It was a great comfort for me, and it gave me a calm feeling inside—something I'd never known before.

In Steps Four and Five, I looked at myself honestly. A Fourth Step can be done many times, and it is an ongo-

ing process. I got honest with myself, my God, and my sponsor in the Fifth Step. I shared my wrongs and my secrets—and a rock was lifted from my shoulders that very night.

Steps Six and Seven are known as action steps. While working them, I addressed what had come out in my Fourth Step. All I was told was that I should pray to become ready. These

worried about people not accepting my amends, but again, it was enough just to attempt to do the right thing and try to carry out God's will.

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are maintenance steps. In the tenth, it's sort of a daily Fourth Step and, again, it entails stepping back when needed and saying, "I'm sorry, I was wrong." I have recently learned a meditation technique to get closer to my God, and to listen for answers and guidance. I pray for his will and the strength to accept and carry it out, no matter what it may be; because going back to my Third Step (and it's okay to go back) I did the entire show over, so why not pray for the power to carry it out?

The Twelfth Step talks of a spiritual awakening, which in my opinion is merely a change in attitude as a result of these Twelve Steps. I try, one day at a time, to practice them in everything I do and with everyone I deal with in my personal life and on the job.

If in reading this article, it sounds like I think I'm a perfect person, I apologize; I am by no means perfect, nor will I ever be. *Thank God.* I fall short many, many times because, aside from being a recovering addict, I'm also a human being.

How precious and wonderful it is to have these steps in my life. I wish everyone did; what a beautiful world this would be. I heard someone say at a meeting recently, "The elevator to recovery is out, so please use the steps..."

S.M., New Jersey

steps are also parts of a life-long process, and I still try to work them on a daily basis to change my old ways.

In the Eighth and Ninth Steps, again I used prayer to become willing to make amends to the people I had hurt, including myself. I was very

The Twelfth Step

When I hit bottom and found Narcotics Anonymous, the last thing I expected was a spiritual awakening. I came to N.A. because I could no longer function as a human being, either with the using or without it. The disease of addiction had scored a major victory in my life. It had beaten me to complete bankruptcy. I lived like an animal. I hated myself and wanted to die, but was too afraid to take my own life. My spirit was dead, and I could no longer hear my conscience. Instead of applying spiritual principles in my life, I practiced defects of character.

A few years have passed since I hit that bottom. Today, the Twelfth Step is a reality for me. I have had that spiritual awakening. I have found the hope and freedom in the N.A. message of recovery. I know that in order for me to keep the message I need to give it away, so I choose to carry it to other addicts. I have learned the meaning of many spiritual principles, and I make an effort to practice them in my daily affairs.

The spiritual awakening I have had has not come from wishful thinking, but as the result of living the steps.

It was in my personal journey of applying the steps that my personality began to change, making room for the awakening to occur. The steps have arrested the disease, and have replaced many of my shortcomings with sound, solid spiritual principles that have touched all areas of my life.

To me, a spiritual awakening has certain ingredients that make it happen. Remaining abstinent from all

drugs is the beginning. Then there is the need to re-center my life. To do that, I had to come to believe in a Higher Power. Today, my life is centered in a personal daily relationship with a loving God. My ego, then, takes a step back, and that allows God's will to become the focus of the day.

The awakening supplies me with beautiful spiritual feelings that were never there before. It helps me to

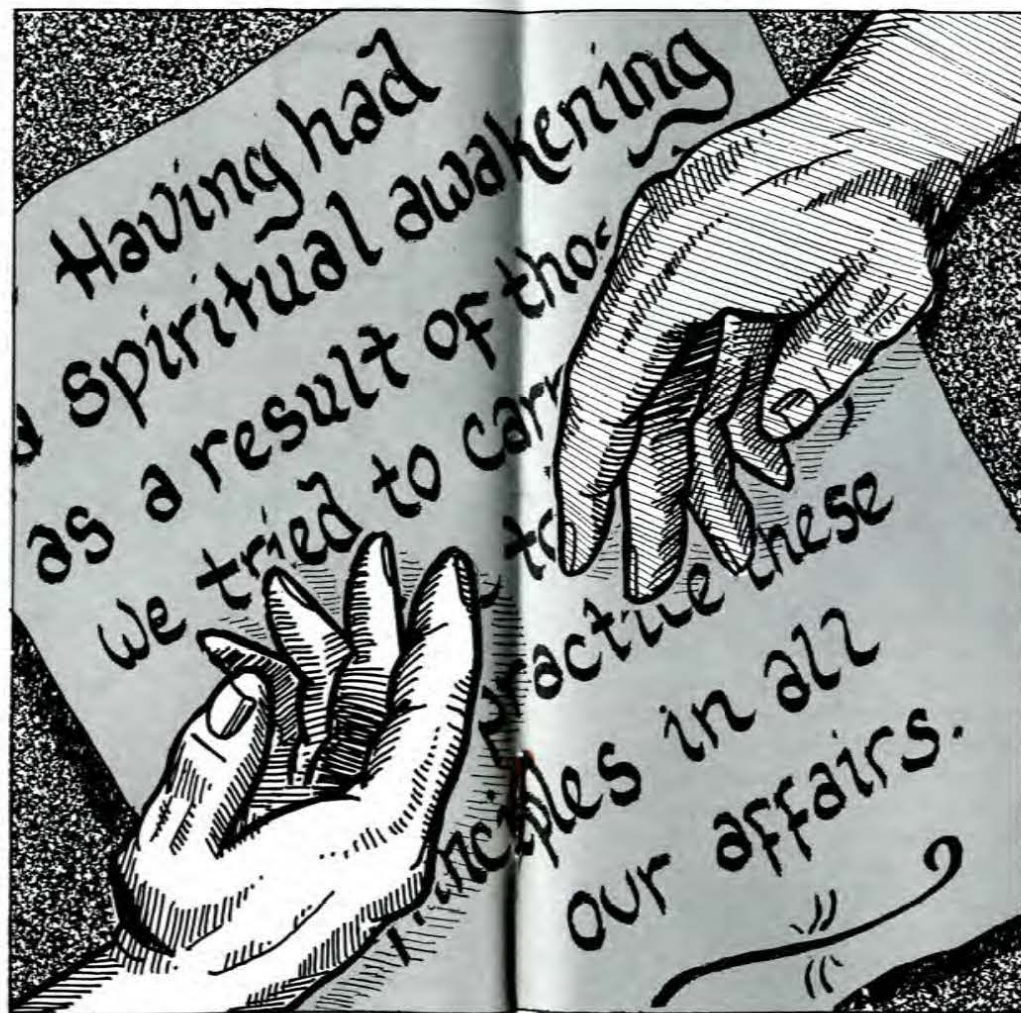
achieve goals that were impossible in the past. It has removed many of my selfish motives and replaced them with the desire to be an instrument of God's will.

The awakening increases my need to get out of self and help those in need. It is rich, deep, and meaningful. Nobody can take it away from me, but I can lose it if I do not continue to do the things that maintain it. So this means I will need to continue living by the steps of recovery.

Carrying the message to addicts has given my life a meaning and purpose. Never before have I been able to truly get out of myself and help others. The strength that comes from carrying the message is amazing. I have to be willing to carry the message, because it was carried to me.

The message has kept me coming back. The hope that was once invisible has become real, and I've gained the freedom to live a better life. When I get out of self and give it away, some wonderful feelings present themselves. I feel happy. I walk away feeling worthwhile. My life is touched, and I feel renewed.

This message is hope and freedom. That is all I can carry. It is the hope that nobody has to continue to live in the prime of active addiction, and the freedom to live without the bondage of the disease. To share the message keeps me in remembrance of that dreadful place I came from. I cannot afford to lose sight of this essential part of recovery, because it is my life line to sanity. This brings me gratitude. It makes my life useful and productive.



Just like the awakening, the principles I need to practice come from the steps. The principles surface as a result of applying the steps.

Each one of the steps has certain principles contained within it. Every time I live a step, it adds a principle to my life. I have found many principles—honesty, empathy, patience, and dozens more. These are my life-assets.

I need to practice those principles outside of the N.A. Fellowship as well as within. The terms of life are simple. The way I see it, there are four major parts of life. They are family, work, social life, and education. I

come in contact with at least three of them daily. When I practice the principles of recovery outside of N.A., my life becomes productive.

There are personalities that are difficult to deal with. The principles help me to deal with them constructively. I have come to understand that life has many terms. In the past, the resources I had with which to deal with those terms were limited. When I practice the principles in all of my affairs, I demonstrate the miracle of the N.A. way of life. I can be counted on. People can see who I really am. I show the example of recovery.

W.K., Florida



What happens when we bring our disease to service?

A friend of mine is deeply involved in service to his home group. He chairs meetings, speaks when he is asked, and sponsors other members. He also does a regular shift as group steward: setting up for the meeting, making coffee, and cleaning up afterwards. He used to help empty the ashtrays, but that was before the group decided to become a non-smoking meeting last year.

When my friend discusses N.A. service, he focuses on the group level. If any other type of service is mentioned—from area service, to regional service, to world—he almost invariably compares it unfavorably to group-level service. My friend refers to other types of service as “moving downward” in the structure.

I think I understand the reasons for my friend's attitude. By downgrading area, regional, and world service, he is asserting the importance of service at the group and addict-to-addict lev-

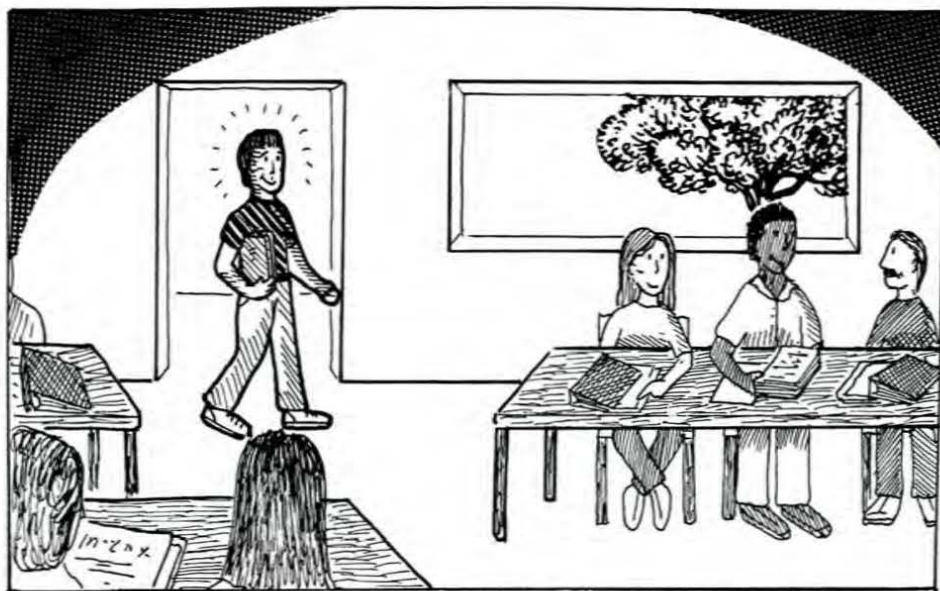
el. He is also poking fun at people who take their service positions too seriously, and who use those positions as N.A. status symbols.

While I agree with my friend, that without addict-to-addict and group service, N.A. wouldn't exist, I disagree with the attitude he takes to other types of service in our fellowship. I think that *all* service is important and that we should respect *all* the people who serve N.A.

Service is not status; service is service. By this, I mean that service is something that all N.A. members are asked to do, and that no type of service, spiritually speaking, is more or less important than any other. It is disturbing to me when members begin to imply that their service is more significant than that of other members.

My own perception of service comes with my understanding of the Twelfth Step: “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.” I view my N.A. service as an attempt to fulfill the commitment I made in Step Twelve to carry the N.A. message to addicts.

Service at its spiritual foundation is recovering addicts working the Twelfth Step. Underlying what the Basic Text refers to as the “selfless... principle of Step Twelve” is a spiritual concept of service agreed to by all our members who accept the steps in their lives. So, when recovering addicts tell me that they're “not into service,” I just assume that they haven't reached the Twelfth Step yet.



Before reaching Step Twelve myself, however, I had unclear ideas regarding service. For instance, I often saw service merely as a social vehicle, as a way of hanging out with other addicts. I frequently used service as an opportunity to bolster my self-esteem, as a symbol of my importance. And, worst of all, there were times when I unconsciously perceived service as an opportunity to act out on a number of my character defects, viewing N.A. as an environment where people were more likely to forgive my anti-social behavior.

Not only did I bring my disease of addiction to N.A., I brought it to N.A. service as well. All the anger, envy, stubbornness, hatred, rage, and selfishness that characterized my addiction also characterized my service at the beginning of my recovery. But when I began to see service in its true light—as carrying the message to addicts—my attitude toward it changed.

There is a difference between service-oriented recovery and recovery-oriented service. My own N.A. experience is living proof of that. When I was involved in service before I allowed the Twelve—all twelve—Steps into my life, service to me was just another way to work out my obsession with acceptance, esteem, and control. But when I became involved in service as a result of connecting it to the Twelfth Step, my service became motivated by gratitude to N.A. and by joy in life and recovery.

Narcotics Anonymous is hardly immune from the potential for difficulties that plague any organization. Any good management consultant will tell us that the success of a group or organization is determined by the personalities of the people serving it. When those people are healthy and sane—by means of working the Twelve Steps, in our case—the organization will function smoothly. But

when those people are suffering from debilitating defects of character—untreated by the Twelve Steps, in our case—the organization could be in deep trouble.

Many addicts suffer from perfectionism, insistence that others submit to our way of doing things, dogmatism, dishonesty, and obstinacy. We can be almost totally out of touch with our emotions and our intuition, unable to differentiate among our feelings. When we have trouble recognizing the shades of difference that make feelings distinct from one another, we boil everything we feel into a cauldron of fear spiced with anger. Addiction brings with it a tendency toward self-centeredness accompanied by mood swings, and I think addicts disrupt the normal rhythms of life by an orientation toward crisis. It is only through the steps that we learn to overcome these shortcomings and become loving, sane, productive members of our society.

It is reasonable to assume that an organization dominated by people suffering from these traits may very well suffer, too. Service meetings, for instance, might be characterized by people arguing unrelentingly for their position, or by rage and verbal violence.

If any of this reminds you of your local area service (or area “circus” as it is sometimes called) committee, the regional subcommittee you served on last year, or the disappointment you felt the first time you went to California to see the World Service Conference in action, then I’ve probably struck a responsive chord in this article.

The next time you hear people bragging that, “I was into service before the blood was dry on your arm,” don’t be impressed too quickly. Both for our sake and for theirs, ask them how they’re coming along on the steps.

J.F., Pennsylvania



Meetings are being held in institutions. How do they relate to N.A., and how does N.A. relate to them?

Are they really N.A. meetings?

A report from the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on Isolated N.A. Groups/Meetings.

Narcotics Anonymous meetings are being held in some correctional facilities and treatment centers. Most N.A. members on the outside are familiar with the meetings conducted in such facilities by local H&I panels. But only recently have we begun to focus attention on another kind of N.A. meeting being held in some of these facilities—meetings being conducted without any support or direction from the local H&I subcommittee or any other element of the N.A. service structure. Some of these meetings are sponsored by facility staff members; others are conducted by N.A. groups/meetings composed solely of residents of the facilities.

Some people call these gatherings "H&I meetings." But N.A.'s *H&I Handbook* says clearly that "an H&I meeting/presentation is always held under the auspices of an H&I subcommittee. Any meeting not linked into the service structure in this way is not an H&I meeting." Even though these meetings are held in institutions, they are not H&I meetings.

For the purpose of this report, we are calling these entities what they have chosen to call themselves—*N.A. groups and meetings*. The committee's discussions have focussed on

the fact that there are N.A. members in institutions who are entitled to N.A. services. The question, then, is how those services can be provided.

To gain a clearer understanding of the situation, a survey was conducted. The survey asked for information on independent meetings being conducted in treatment centers and correctional facilities. In early May 1989, questionnaires were mailed to 371 area and regional service committees. By the mid-September 1989 deadline, 57 responses had been returned. The information supplied by the survey helped give our discussions some foundation in fact.

How common are these groups/meetings?

Meetings in institutions appear to be both numerous and widespread. About 44% of the survey respondents reported knowledge of N.A. meetings being conducted independently in treatment or correctional facilities in their service territories. These twenty-five respondents reported on forty-six different independent meetings, nine being held in treatment facilities, the remaining thirty-seven being conducted in prisons.

In addition to the questionnaire, information was made available by the WSO H&I Department. On file were reports showing the creation of 187 independent meetings between January 1st and October 5th, 1989. Of these, 177 were meetings in prisons, and ten were in treatment facilities. In addition, twelve N.A.-oriented meetings started or run by professionals had been initiated in the same period, nine in correctional facilities, three in treatment.

The geographic spread of these meetings was significant in itself. The 199 new meetings on file in the H&I department represented forty-three U.S. states and the Virgin Islands, as well as Canada, Australia, India, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Summary

N.A. meetings in institutions are widespread and numerous.

They are *not* H&I meetings.

Recovering addicts attending those meetings *are* N.A. members, entitled to the same services as any N.A. member.

N.A. groups or meetings in institutions should determine for themselves whether or not they wish to be a part of the service structure—and in what fashion—according to their own needs and desires, within the restrictions of their circumstances.

In order for an N.A. community to reach out to these groups, it's not necessary to create a whole new subcommittee. An existing subcommittee, or a combination of subcommittees, can attend to the needs of these groups.

It is the responsibility of the N.A. Fellowship as a whole—and of each individual N.A. community—to reach out to groups and meetings in institutions, and not just to wait for them to contact us.

'N.A. groups or meetings in institutions should determine for themselves whether or not they wish to be a part of the service structure.'

Why are these meetings not served by H&I panels? Of those reporting knowledge of groups or meetings in institutions, 40% said they had insufficient manpower to send panels to these institutions. Another 32% said that access requirements and other restrictions were so rigid that they were unable to get in to meetings at the facilities. The distance factor was cited by 20% of the committees involved. One response said that it was the choice of the group itself to remain isolated from the N.A. community on the outside.

What do these groups/meetings want from the fellowship on the outside? There seemed to be three common requests from groups and members in institutions, according to the WSO correspondence files and mail we received. They asked for N.A. literature. They requested group starter kits to help them get their meetings off the ground. And they wanted information about how to contact nearby N.A. service committees, so that they could ask them for support.

What kinds of support are these groups/meetings being given already? There were a number of examples given of how some of these groups and meetings in institutions participate in the local service structure. At a correctional facility in Canada, administrators allowed a member to serve as a group service representative, and gave him six hour passes once a month to attend the local ASC meeting and speak for his group. In another area, a member on the outside was elected alternate GSR of the inside group, reporting on how the group was doing and keeping the group in touch with the local N.A. community. And in a third region, outside members regularly sent service committee minutes and other information on N.A. activities to groups in institutions.

Many of the area and regional committees that reported knowledge of groups or meetings in institutions also said they maintained

communications of one sort or another with the staff of these institutions. Only 10%, however, said they kept in touch with the addicts themselves in these institutions. The majority expressed a willingness to do so, but felt they needed more direction on how to go about establishing those contacts the right way.

Groups and meetings in institutions, and the service structure. The groups we've been discussing are composed of N.A. members seeking to take advantage of the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. We felt that these N.A. members have a valid claim to the same rights, privileges, and services any N.A. member is entitled to. Area and regional service committees, as well as the World Service Conference and the World Service Office, are responsible to provide them with whatever support possible. And these groups should have the opportunity to provide input on fellowship questions at the area, regional, and world levels. N.A. groups or meetings in institutions should determine for themselves whether or not they wish to be a part of the service structure—and in what fashion—according to their own needs and desires, within the restrictions of their circumstances.

How can groups and meetings in institutions take part in the service structure? One suggestion raised was to register these groups with the World Service Office, thereby placing them on the mailing list for the *Newsline* and making local service contact information available to them. Once such contact information was available, groups or meetings in institutions would be able to keep in touch with the nearest area and regional service committees.

While most such groups would not be able to send GSRs to area committee meetings, their GSRs could serve as mail contacts. These GSRs could supply the outside N.A. community with regular information on how

Unanswered questions

Are the groups and meetings discussed in this report N.A. groups and meetings?

In reaching out to groups in institutions, a substantial amount of interaction with facility administrators and professionals will be called for. We feel strongly about the need for assistance by professionals in starting N.A. meetings in an institutional setting, yet we sense resistance to this idea. How does the fellowship feel about the idea of professionals starting N.A. meetings?

In many locales, area or regional outreach subcommittees focus exclusively on the needs of *geographically* isolated groups. Should outreach subcommittees focus on the needs of groups in institutions as well?

The issue of isolated N.A. groups and meetings extends far beyond the narrow scope of this report. It includes those groups which are isolated by national borders, and by cultural, economic, and social differences. How does the fellowship intend to see that the needs of such groups are met?

'It is the responsibility of the N.A. Fellowship to reach out to these groups.'

their groups were doing, and on what kinds of support their groups needed from the N.A. community. GSRs could also, in turn, keep their groups up to date on what was happening in N.A. at the local, regional, and world levels, using correspondence, minutes, and newsletters mailed to them by members on the outside as their sources of information.

How can the service structure assist these groups and meetings? It is the responsibility of the N.A. Fellowship as a whole—and of each individual N.A. community—to reach out to groups and meetings in institutions, and not just to wait for them to contact us. Areas and regions which have the money and the manpower should consider how they can most effectively reach out to these groups/meetings.

Some will want to establish special outreach subcommittees specifically to meet the needs of these groups. But it's not always necessary to set up a new subcommittee to do this job. Sometimes an already existing subcommittee, or more than one subcommittee, can attend to the needs of groups in institutions. Service committees in different locales can go about meeting the needs of these groups in different ways, according to each committee's ability. What's imperative is that, to the extent a local committee is able, all possible efforts are made to meet the needs of these N.A. members, groups, and meetings in institutions.

What do members of these groups need most? The two things groups/meetings in institutions need most, according to correspondence, are contact with other recovering addicts—in person and by mail—and N.A. literature. Once it's been established which local subcommittee or subcommittees is to take responsibility for reaching out to groups in institutions, those subcommittees can go about getting a clearer idea of access and correspondence limitations for the facilities involved. After discussion in the area and

regional committees, and in the groups themselves, those subcommittees will have a sense of how much support is available from the N.A. community for outreach to groups in nearby institutions. The subcommittees can then begin to coordinate that outreach work.

Making N.A. literature available to these groups/meetings is critical. How much literature can and should be made available will depend primarily on two factors: the amount of money available in the area or regional treasury, and the amount of literature that can actually be used by the groups in nearby institutions. The condition of the treasury is easy to check. The amount of literature needed by "inside" groups, however, can only be determined by contacting the groups themselves, and by staying in touch to see whether the need increases or decreases.

Some problems may be encountered in seeking to supply groups or meetings in institutions with N.A. literature. The necessary funds may be lacking. An area committee finding itself in such a position might consider appealing to the regional committee for assistance; a regional committee, to the World Service Conference. The greater N.A. Fellowship may be able to meet needs that one of its smaller elements cannot handle on its own.

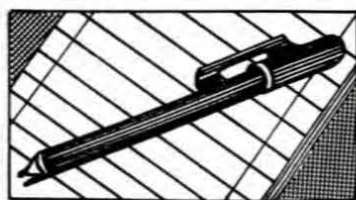
Our fellowship's ultimate goal is to make it possible for any addict who wants to take advantage of the opportunities for recovery available in Narcotics Anonymous to be able to do so. If this goal is to be realized, then we as a fellowship will need to address this issue in much broader terms in the very near future.

This report has been edited for publication in *The N.A. Way Magazine* with the cooperation of the chairperson of the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on Isolated N.A. Groups/Meetings. The complete report will appear shortly in one of the regular World Service Conference publications.

What can I do?

We encourage those reading this report to ask the chairperson of their area or regional service committee to reserve time at the next committee meeting for a discussion of meetings in institutions. In the beginning, the discussion may go only so far as to assign further discussion to a subcommittee, so that specific action can be planned. Or a special workshop or sharing session may be scheduled to allow for extended consideration of the needs of these groups/meetings in the area or region. Each area or region is free to address the subject in its own way; the important part is to start the discussion.

Viewpoint



Put *It Works* on hold

I'm concerned about our steps and traditions book. I remember when I was real new, hearing a member with a huge amount of clean time share at a convention about a steps and traditions book and how he felt about it: "If it works, don't fix it. The steps and traditions are in the Basic Text." I figured this guy knew what he was talking about, since he had been clean for so long, so I adopted his attitude.

The following year, the review and input form of *It Works: How and Why* was sent out to the fellowship. I was real hungry for knowledge, so I bought a copy and read it. I discussed it with my sponsor and we both agreed: correct the punctuation here and there, and let's print it. It's great.

The next year, the approval form of

the steps portion of *It Works* was released. I bought it and read it. My first question was, "What happened to all the material from the review and input?" As it turned out, this piece was not approved at the following World Service Conference meeting.

What has resulted since that time is a lot of work, a huge amount of money spent, controversy, and chaos. The bottom line is that we still don't have a book on our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Please, I am not knocking the people who have been involved. I know that these members have put in long hours and have given much of themselves because of their love for the fellowship. I have heard and seen enough of the accusations of who's right and who's wrong in this. But, to be honest, I must be living in the problem, too, because I sure don't have a solution.

A suggestion may be that we put this top-priority project on the back burner, simply to say that perhaps our fellowship is not mature enough as a whole to complete a project of this magnitude. We could take the energy, both positive and negative, that we have generated in this project, and use it to complete lesser projects and to gear ourselves to helping our international brothers and sisters.

I've already stated that my sponsor

and I thought the review and input draft was great. I believe it has to do with us both being simple-type guys; and my "spons" has always told me to keep it simple. The things I enjoy reading and hearing are the things that tug at my heart. I've always been told that our recovery literature was written by addicts for addicts, and that "the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict." Are we possibly trying to be too professional, and losing that addict flavor in our recovery literature?

There always exists the possibility that it's just not time for us to have a steps and traditions book. Thousands upon thousands of addicts have experienced recovery in Narcotics Anonymous while *It Works: How and Why* has been in progress. What we already have must be doing okay.

Sure, the need is there. My question: is the need so great that we have to spend so much of our time, resources, and energy coming up empty-handed? Can't we divert those resources and energy in another direction, at least for the time being?

So many members have taught me what the word unity means, as it appears in our First Tradition. To see our fellowship embroiled in such controversy has cut into me deeply. You see, I have nowhere else to go.

From where I sit, it looks as if we have created a monster. I say, let the monster die a natural death. Then, and only then, can we create something that is more pleasing to the eye (and to the heart).

Anonymous, California

More on children at meetings

The issue that prompted me to write was the question of children at meetings. This has become a problem at my home group. The first time this situation came up, a member brought her children only if she was absolutely stuck and the kids, who were about nine and twelve, were quiet and well-behaved. We hardly knew they were there. There were times, however, when I cringed at some of the colorful language being used in their presence.

That seemed to give the green light to a lot of people to start bringing their kids to meetings. I feel like a hypocrite for complaining about this, because I recall very clearly saying to a newcomer that if it meant making a choice between no meeting or bringing the child to a meeting, then bring the kid.

However, I've eaten my words many times since. For example, I left a meeting at half time a few days ago because someone brought a young child to a meeting; everyone was paying more attention to the kid than to the readings. I tried to be generous about the situation. After all, I know the

kid's father doesn't get to spend much time with his son. But what about me? I have no children, and I've never been faced with that choice. I go to a meeting because I need a meeting, not to watch a toddler being his cute little self.

I feel that this has deeply affected my home group. I've seen it change from a powerful meeting to a social club. The fact that children are allowed to wander freely through a closed N.A. meeting has watered down the message. To me, it's distracting and annoying. A meeting is not

'if it meant making a choice between no meeting or bringing the child to a meeting, then bring the kid.'

the place for children except when there is no alternative.

As I said in the beginning, when a certain member of my group occasionally brought her children, it was not an inconvenience to me in any way, because these children were taught to behave and respect the rights of the members. I'm not amused, however, at the antics of the kids I've been seeing at meetings lately, and sincerely ask all members who bring children to meetings to make other arrangements, for the benefit of the other members, except when you have absolutely *no other alternative*.

C.P., Canada

Taking a group inventory

Our newcomers are supposed to be the most important people at our meetings. Some may say about a newcomer who doesn't come back to our meetings, "It wasn't their time to get clean." Even though this might be true, shouldn't we feel like we at least planted a seed of hope, and that we offered an attractive atmosphere of recovery? We could ask ourselves some of the following questions in taking a group Fourth or Tenth Step: Are we working together to help make recovery available to newcomers?

Do we create confusion by mentioning other fellowships or non-N.A. literature at meetings?

Are we steering away from advice-giving and simply sharing our recovery, experience, and hope?

Are there a lot of distractions during the meeting?

Does cross talk or interruptions of the sharing go on during the course of the meeting?

Do we use the meetings as a place to interact with our friends, forgetting what the meeting is really there for?

Are we watchful of our traditions?

If any of these questions have sparked an interest in our primary purpose, we'll all benefit from doing the best we can. We're not perfect; we'll make mistakes. But the program teaches us that mistakes can be corrected; we don't need to make them over and over.

It hurts us all when a person comes back around to share with us that at their first meeting, they didn't like what they saw. They might have felt like they were really insignificant, and have gotten the impression that nobody really cared if they stayed clean or not. And think about the addicts who came around and left feeling that way who haven't made it back yet—and maybe never will.

Sometimes it might be difficult for us to see when the disease of addiction is making its way into the atmosphere of recovery, and other times it may be obvious. Just as we individuals find that when we apply spiritual principles we can start to recover and grow, the group as a whole can also experience the same kind of spiritual growth by using the same vehicles as individual members: our steps and traditions.

The fellowship as a whole and our individual meetings are truly gifts. This bit of sharing is simply out of concern that we don't abuse our gifts, and that we make our fellowship as available as we possibly can to the new person walking in to their first meeting. Someone's life may well depend on it. Most of us would agree that ours did.

Anonymous

We need stories!

Remember, *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.

Who writes stories?

You do!

The stories you see in this magazine are written by N.A. members—like you! You don't need to be a "great writer." All you need is your personal experience in recovery, and the willingness to share it. Without it, we don't have a message to carry. In every sense, that's *The N.A. Way*.

What do I write?

Share as you would 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? Share it with your fellow N.A. Way readers. We'd love to hear from you! Write us at:

The N.A. Way Magazine

P.O. Box 9999

Van Nuys, CA 91409 U.S.A.



Comin' up

ALASKA: Mar. 2-4, 1990; 6th Alaska Regional Convention; send speaker tapes; ARC-6, P.O. Box 84946, Fairbanks, AK 99708

ARIZONA: May 25-27, 1990; 4th Arizona Regional Convention; Ramada Renaissance Hotel, 200 N. Centennial Way, Mesa; rsvn.s (602) 898-8300; ARC-4, P.O. Box 44374, Phoenix, AZ 85064

AUSTRALIA: April 13-15, 1990; Australian Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous; Function Centre, North Sydney Oval, Corner Miller and Ridge Streets; Narcotics Anonymous, P.O. Box 591, Chatswood NSW 2057, Australia; Narcotics Anonymous, P.O. Box 591, Chatswood, NSW 2057, Australia,

CALIFORNIA: Feb. 3, 1990; 5th Annual Napa-Solano Unity Day; Town & Country Fairgrounds, 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 California Regional Convention; San Jose Civic & Convention Center; housing at Fairmont Hotel (408-998-1900), Holiday Inn (408-998-0400), and Red Lion Inn (408-453-4000), San Jose; NCC-12, P.O. Box 215667, Sacramento, CA 95821

3) May 26-27, 1990; Multi-Regional Public Information Learning Days; St. Jude's Reception Hall, 3824 Mitchell Rd., Ceres; phoneline (209) 526-1817; SVG-PI, P.O. Box 675, Modesto, CA 95350

FLORIDA: Mar. 16-18, 1990; 1st Florida Spring Service Break; Holiday Inn, 999 N. Atlantic Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale FL 33304; rsvn.s (305) 563-5961; FSSB-1, P.O. Box 601412, N. Miami Beach, FL 33160

2) May 4-6, 1990; 3rd Annual Florida Regional H&I Awareness Weekend; Clearwater Beach

Hilton Hotel, 715 S. Gulfview Blvd., Clearwater Beach, FL 34630; rsvn.s (813) 447-9566; phoneline (813) 894-6262; FRSC, 1110 N.E. 34th Court, Oakland Park, FL 33334; Florida RSC, 1110 N.E. 34th Court, Oakland Park, FL 33334

3) Jun. 28-Jul. 1, 1990; 9th Florida Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency Miami, City Center at Riverwalk, 400 SE 2nd Ave., Miami FL 33131, (305) 358-1234; RSO (305) 563-4262; FRC-9, Florida RSO, 1110 NE 34th Ct., Oakland Park, FL 33433

GEORGIA: Feb. 22-25, 1990; 9th Georgia Regional Convention; Ironworks Convention Center, Columbus; accommodations at Columbus Hilton, (800) HIL-TONS, and Sheraton Inn, (404) 327-6868; GRC, Inc., P.O. Box 971, Pine Lake, GA 30072

HAWAII: Feb. 16-18, 1990; 6th Oahu Gathering of the Fellowship; Camp Erdman, North Shore, Oahu; Hawaii RSO (808) 941-8636; Windward phoneline 941-HELP; Fellowship Weekend, P.O. Box 27909, Honolulu, HI 96827

2) Jun. 8-11, 1990; 4th Big Island Gathering; Mauna Kea State Park; phoneline (808) 969-6644; Big Island Gathering, P.O. Box 5415, Kailua Kona, HI 96745

ILLINOIS: Apr. 27-29, 1990; 2nd Chicagoland Regional Convention; Sheraton International at O'Hare, 6810 N. Mannheim, Rosemont IL 60018; rsvn.s (708) 297-1234 (ask for CRC-2 rates); Chicago Service Office (708) 848-2211; CRC-2 c/o CSO, 212 S. Marion, Ste. 27, Oak Park, IL 60302

INDIANA: Jul. 27-29, 1990; 6th Mid-Coast Convention; Hilton at the Airport, 2500 S. High School Rd., Indianapolis; rsvn.s (800) 445-8667 or (317) 244-3361; send speaker tapes; MCC-6, P.O. Box 47462, Indianapolis, IN 46227

IOWA: Jun. 29-Jul. 1, 1990; 4th Iowa Regional Convention; Holiday Motor Lodge, Clear Lake

KANSAS: Apr. 6-8, 1990; 7th Mid-America Convention; Holiday Inn, Great Bend; MAC-7, P.O. Box 374, Great Bend, KS 67530

KENTUCKY: Feb. 2-4, 1990; 5th Kentuckiana Regional Traditions Workshop; Executive Inn, 1 Executive Blvd., Owensboro KY 42301; rsvn.s (800) 626-1936; Traditions Workshop, 2626 Parrish Av., St. 228, Owensboro, KY 42301

2) Apr. 13-15, 1990; 4th Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Executive Inn, 1 Executive Blvd., Paducah KY 42001

LOUISIANA: May 25-27, 1990; 8th Louisiana Purchase Regional Convention; Hotel Bentley, 200 DeSoto St., Alexandria, LA 71301; rsvn.s outside of LA (800) 356-6835; rsvn.s inside of LA (800) 624-2778; LPRCNA VIII, P.O. Box 3192, Pineville, LA 71361; LPRCNA, P.O. Box 3192, Pineville, LA 71361

MARYLAND: Mar. 23-25, 1990; 4th Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City Convention Center; accommodations CPRC Hotel Request, P.O. Box 4062, Salisbury MD 21801, tel. (800) 654-5440; CPRC-4, P.O. Box 771, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MICHIGAN: Jul. 5-8, 1990; 6th Michigan Regional Convention; Valley Plaza Inn, Midland; RV park avlbl.; rsvn.s (800) 825-2700; RSO (313) 544-2010; send speaker tapes w/clean dates; MRC-6, P.O. Box 597, Bay City, MI 48707

MINNESOTA: Jun. 8-10, 1990; 7th Upper Midwest Regional Convention; College of St. Scholastica, Duluth; phoneline (701) 234-9330; send speaker tapes; UMRC-7, P.O. Box 5393, Fargo, ND 58105

MISSOURI: Jun. 15-17, 1990; 5th Show Me Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Executive Center, 2200 I-70 Dr., Columbia; rsvn.s (800) HOLIDAY; phoneline (314) 635-0271; SMRC-5, P.O. Box 373, Columbia, MO 65205-0373

NEVADA: Feb. 9-11, 1990; 4th Southern Nevada Convention; Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas; rsvn.s (800) 634-6942; SNCC, P.O. Box 4771, Las Vegas, NV 89127-0771

NORTH CAROLINA: Mar. 9-11, 1990; 3rd Capital Area Convention; Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Towers, I-40 Exit 282 (between Raleigh and Durham); rsvn.s (919) 755-5050 (out of state), (800) 222-6503 (in state); CAC-3, P.O. Box 50196, Raleigh, NC 27650

2) Mar. 30-Apr. 1, 1990; 5th Greater Charlotte Area Convention; Marriott Executive Park, 5700 Westpark Dr., Charlotte; rsvn.s (800) 228-9290; GCAC-5, P.O. Box 32262, Charlotte, NC 28232

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

OKLAHOMA: 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, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X7

PENNSYLVANIA: Feb. 16-18, 1990; 6th Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference; Embers Convention Center, Carlisle; rsvn.s (717) 243-1717; MARLC-6, P.O. Box 15303, Harrisburg, PA 17105

2) Mar. 23-25, 1990; 8th Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention; Adams Mark Hotel, City Line & Monument Rd., Phila. PA 19131; rsvn.s (800) 231-5858 or (215) 581-5000; GPRC-8, P.O. Box 42628, Phila., PA 19101-2628

SOUTH CAROLINA: 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

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

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

UNITED KINGDOM: Apr. 20-22, 1990; 1st London Regional Convention; for venue information call UKSO (1) 352-8356; send speaker tapes by 1/15/90; LRC-1, P.O. Box 417, London SW10 ORN, England

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3TEA

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.

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*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 dues or fees. 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.