

THE NA Way[®]

M A G A Z I N E

March 1994

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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 NA Way MAGAZINE®

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From the editor



It's March again—time for our annual classics issue. We first published a classics issue in March 1986. RH, the magazine's editor from 1984 to 1989, felt that some of the best stories published in the early years of the magazine should be published again in a tribute to "the pioneering spirit" of the first editorial team. In introducing the first classics issue, RH highlighted the growth of Narcotics Anonymous, saluting "the collective spirit of recovery in action that gave us our magazine."

We've been publishing classics each March ever since. The articles selected as classics have been chosen in a variety of ways over the years. Sometimes the editor has chosen them, taking note of the fellowship's response to articles. Other times, trusted servants involved with the magazine have helped select the articles. This year, the entire WSO Publishing Team went through every *NA Way* published since September 1982, the magazine's first issue. Team members selected stories they felt were "classics," keeping in mind that classic stories are those that focus on basic principles of recovery in a particularly creative or original way.

Once we had a list of classic stories, we began to pick the ones for

this issue. All of the stories we eventually settled on are from February 1991 or earlier. Some of the stories are serious, while others provide comic relief. Thanks to our new typesetting equipment and our typesetter's creativity, we've been able to use the original artwork with some stories.

We all felt that this assignment was one of the most enjoyable we'd ever had. It is truly a pleasure to read stories of this caliber. It is even more of a pleasure to share them with you.

We'd love to hear your thoughts and feelings about the stories in this issue, or just the classics issue in general. If you have any favorite articles from past issues, please let us know. They may appear as classics in the future.

Comin' up

It has recently come to my attention that the "Comin' Up" section has included personal phone numbers and addresses. Unfortunately, for liability reasons we cannot continue this practice. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

CS, Associate Editor

August 1988

Close encounters of the clean kind

About two months ago I was sitting at my desk when a gentleman walked in. The first thing he said was that I looked very familiar to him. I looked closer, but he did not look familiar to me. "I'm with the Los Angeles County Probation Department," he told me. I laughed. No way could my name or my face or anything be familiar to him. I was never put on probation. All through my years of using, I was either in prison or out on parole. I never got such a break as to be on probation.

He told me he had been next door. There's some type of drug research and advocacy agency there, and he had been giving a "chalk talk" to the staff. While there, he had found out that the NA office (where I work) was next door and had stopped by to get some literature. Then he handed me his calling card. I looked at it, and it all came back.

He had been my son's first probation officer. It was this man standing in front of me who had recommended so many years before that our oldest son, John, get snatched from my

husband and me because we were junkies. The judge had agreed with his recommendation, telling us he was going to make our boy a ward of the county because he would be better off there.

I looked at him and said his name, and told him what my name was, and told him whose mother I was. He was shocked. Then, considering the office we were in, he said, "Of course, you're clean," and I said, "Yes." Then I said, "I've even got a better surprise for you. John is clean, too!" I explained to him how John had gotten clean first and had brought me to my first meeting.

John was smoking weed by the time he was nine years old. At sixteen he was a full-blown junkie, already on probation. He was pretty steadily in trouble with the law, right along with his parents. When my husband died of an overdose, John was eighteen. John became my crime partner, my using partner, you know. And that's how it was until he turned twenty-one.

This probation officer had really taken a big liking to John. I remember him placing John in some kind of recovery house when he was sixteen. It was a twelve-step adolescent program of some kind, and they were really unheard of back then. He had done his best in a bad situation. John stayed only one day at the recovery house. He called home and said, "I need a fix." Being the addict father that he was, my husband went and got him.

This same man took him to another recovery house when John was twenty-one. John stayed a couple of

months, then he got clean at twenty-two, and he's been clean ever since. It's going on thirteen years now. To this day we're both clean through NA. I told this PO that, and he was really just jazzed.

John took me to my first meeting. I call John my hope, and Jimmy—my youngest son—my bottom. I didn't even realize it until just now, but Jimmy was born about the same time that we went to court with John. It was looking at Jimmy that made me see what I had become.

My husband had already died of the disease, and I was a "methadonian." "I'm going to make an orphan out of this kid if I don't clean up," I thought. I mean, he had been born hooked. It had almost

killed him at birth. And now it had come to this.

It was looking at Jimmy that made me understand that I had come to a bottom. I was walking down the street, holding Jimmy's hand, when I just had to stop and call John, who was already clean. I said, "John, I got to do something." I didn't know what—I was totally hopeless—but I had to do something. I asked him if he could think of anything, and he brought me to NA. So John was my hope, you know what I mean? My youngest was my bottom, and my oldest my hope.

So much has happened, not only this big change, but little living changes. I always seem to see the change in me reflected in the changes

in my family. My daughter now has two children of her own. I remember her when she was younger, as a teenager. She had acted as Jimmy's mother, because I really wasn't able to. She's the one who changed his diaper and saw that he ate.

It's so different today. Yesterday, they came by to pick me up from work to take me to baby-sit my two grandchildren. Today, I'm the only one my daughter trusts to watch her children. I mean, that's such a difference. She had to be "mom" years ago, and today she trusts me with her own children. That's quite a difference—the difference recovery makes.

When I'd finished telling him the story, the probation officer said it really did him good to see that I was alive—and that really got me. I mean, I got all choked up.

It took me back to what it used to be like—the kind of mother that I was, the kind of person that I was—and then standing right there in that office with him, being an NA special worker, being clean, being responsible. It's just where I am today, and I got grateful.

Then this gentleman went zooming back next door to where he had been. A man and a woman were sitting in there with the staff, giving their presentations. The woman was from the police department and the man was a judge, I was told later. They were in the middle of a conversation about failure rates for recovering addicts. The staff of the agency was trying to convince them that there was hope and that addicts could recover, but they were up against that

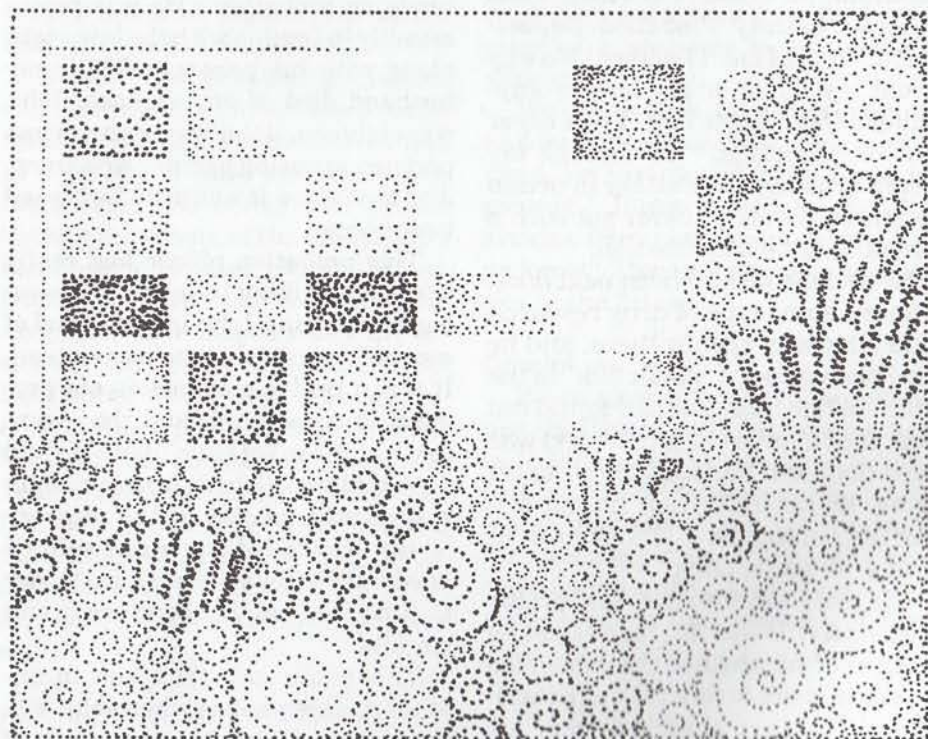
old thing about "once a dope fiend, always a dope fiend," and the failure rate being so high.

The PO just jumped in and said, "Excuse me, but I have a success story to tell you." He told them all about running into me next door, and about John, and about how he had been John's PO. It made him feel good to know that we were both clean, and that it was all due to NA. He said, "What a success story! It does my heart good."

A staff member at the advocacy agency later told me that at that moment there was nothing more that he needed to say. He really believed that was God's message and God's timing. It came in at just the right moment.

I mean, he could have had fifty pages of good stuff written down, and it wouldn't have made any difference to that police officer and judge. But he didn't have to say anything—the proof he needed to change their minds was in the story. They were impressed and so was I when he told me about it! One more time I had felt the brush of God's hand as He reached into my life, and I felt the power of this program all over again.

VM, California



It's hard to fall off when you're in the middle

After six months clean I went back out for 9½ woefully miserable months of using. The first time around I tried to please everyone and do everything perfectly. I became an NA evangelist and proceeded to try to save all my old using partners from addiction. I got so involved trying to save others I forgot to save myself.

7 November 1980 was a turning point in my life. I stumbled back to the program. Coming back was not easy. "Looking good" did not exist, and I was afraid of what you'd think of me. I felt I didn't deserve to live, let alone find recovery and a better way of life. I felt like I was one step below an amoeba on the evolutionary scale.

From 7 November to 27 November, I went to two or three meetings a day loaded. Every day I smoked dope and went to meetings. 27 November found me at the old NA meeting at the VA hospital, loaded of course. About halfway through the meeting, I started "jonesing." I could just feel

that certain drug giving me the instant relief I sought. At that point I reached out for help instead, and I have not had a compulsion to use since that evening. God gave me a gift and removed the desire to use drugs. My own willingness allowed me to fully surrender and accept His gift.

Since that day 5½ years ago, I have had many wonderful experiences in the program. I heard people say, "It's hard to fall off when you're in the middle." The middle of what's happening in NA is service work.

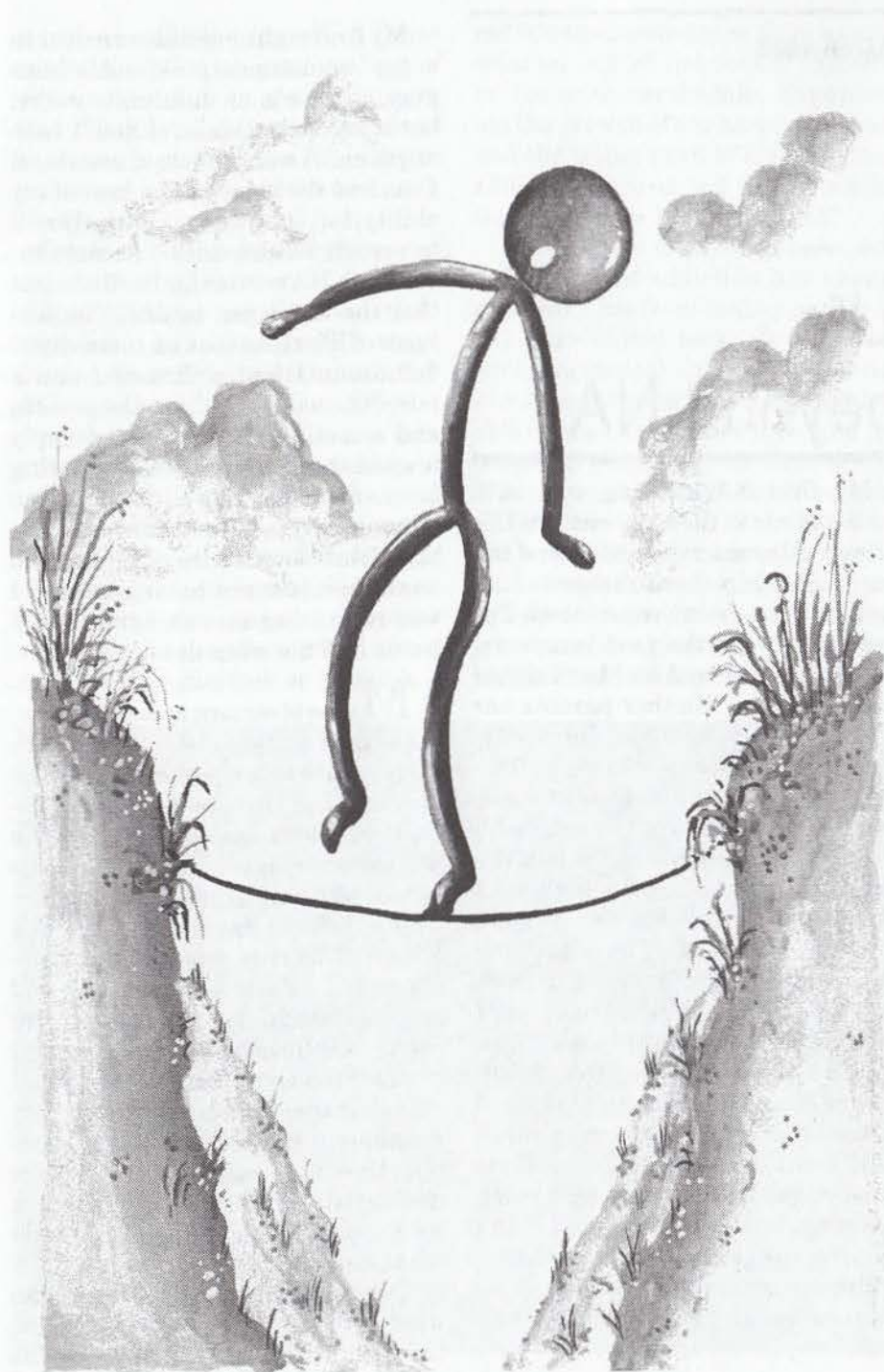
Service work has given me many gifts. When I got here my self-worth was far in the negative zone. Service to NA and helping the suffering addict has taught me to know real self-esteem. I know how to work, how to socialize without drugs, and how to live life on life's terms.

When I got here I had tried every way I could to get off drugs. Nothing worked and my life was miserable. Since I found recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, my life isn't just one-hundred percent better; it's so much better I could not even have imagined life as it is today. It's tens of thousands of times removed from my old way of life. I am deeply grateful to NA. I believe gratitude is an action word expressed through service.

Service work has given me the keys to the mainstream of life. NA's Twelve Steps are the road map. I provide the willingness and effort. God gives the blessings and results.

May you find the joy and benefits of service as I have found.

MM, Washington



Life beyond NA

My first NA meeting was in a midsized city in the southeastern US. After a relapse I returned to find the tiny fellowship there disbanded. I moved to the desert resort town I've lived in now for the past two years. Everything I owned had been either sold or stolen. Neither parents nor friends back east would have anything to do with me—trying to fix a far-gone addict was just too frustrating. I hadn't held a job in two years and had no prospects for one in the foreseeable future. I couldn't take care of myself. I couldn't kill myself, though I had tried. The only thing that numbed the shame and depression was dope, and even that wasn't working anymore. As I later discovered, I was one day away from involuntary commitment to an asylum. I came to this city because my brother and his wife, members of NA, told me I just might find a way to stop using and learn how to live clean. I didn't come for the gambling, or the shows, or the women, or the skiing. I came because I was dying, and NA was here.

My first eight months were lost in a fog—sometimes pink, sometimes gray, or black, or dazzlingly white, but a fog nonetheless. I didn't take anything. I went to lots of meetings. I worked the steps to the best of my ability, but they weren't entirely real to me. It wasn't until I became involved in NA service for the first time that the fog began to lift. The features of life clean took on some vague definition; I had a direction and a purpose, people to share those with, and something of my own to apply toward them. I had been wandering for many moons like a little lost boy, but now a place in this world had been found for me. Recovery became more than just not having to use. I was recovering *something*: a life I'd never had nor even dreamt about.

My involvement in service grew. Sometimes my service activities themselves were possessed by the disease. I grew as self-centered, obsessive, and compulsive in abstinence as I'd ever been while using. I hit the same bottom of depressive hopelessness as before. But this time I wasn't alone. I was surrounded by a sponsor and friends, people who knew and loved me, who'd gone through it themselves and understood. In varying combinations of tough love and gentle empathy they helped me work a personal program. Before long my perspective had returned: a Power greater than myself would restore me to sanity if I would practice daily what had worked for others.

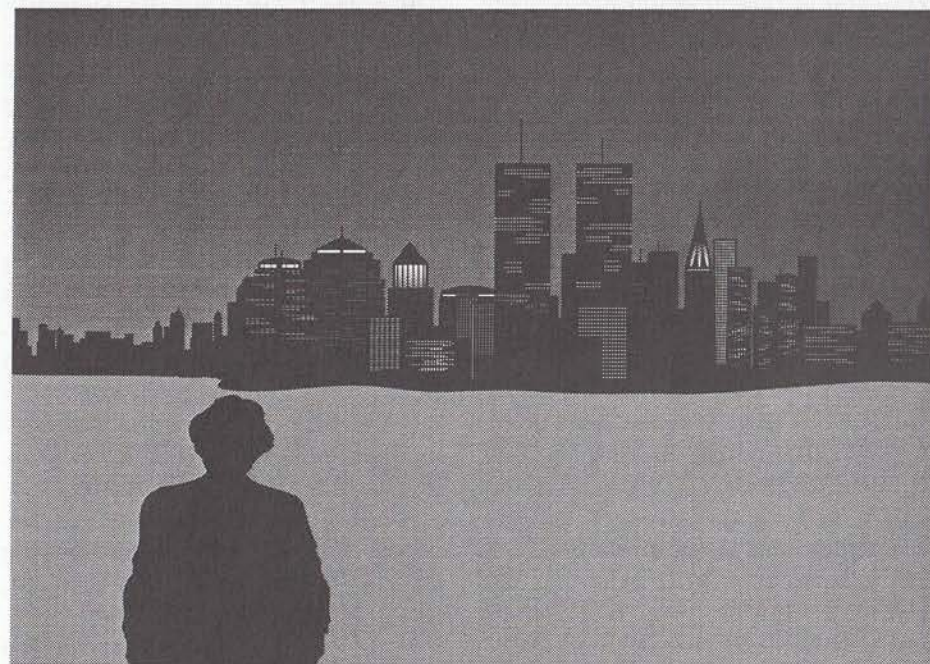
I've stayed in service. I've contributed to the welfare of fellow addicts, helping maintain and improve the

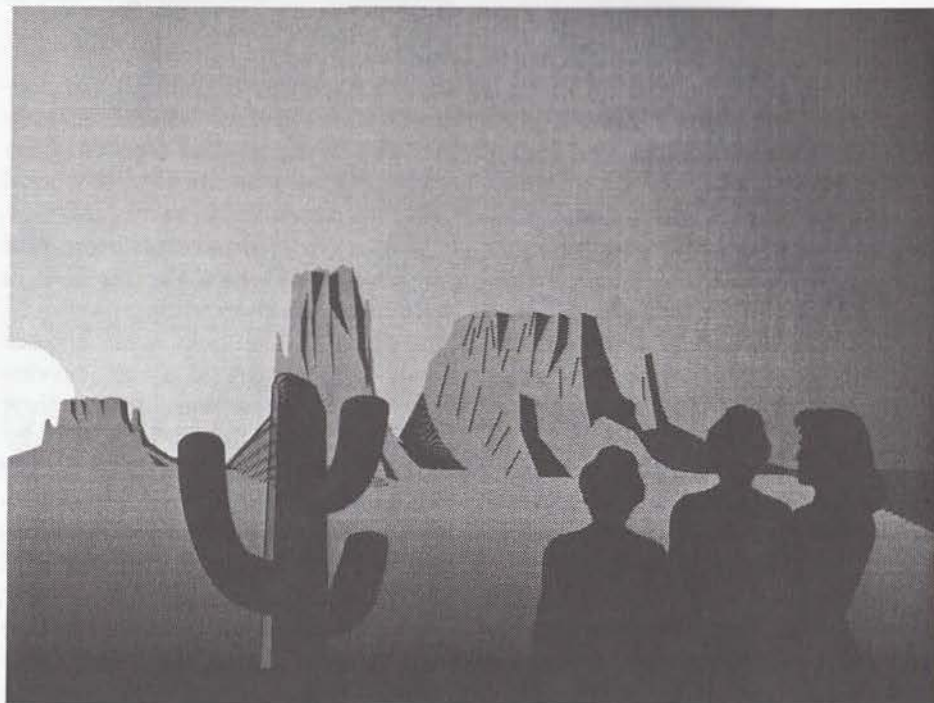
services available to me when I first needed them. In doing so, I've been of significant value to society in general. The rush I get from being used for some necessary job in NA is better and more consistent than any rush the dope ever gave me. I like it.

But is that all there is to recovery: just *furthering* recovery? I mean, sure, it's in my own self-interest to do what I can to make sure NA stays alive. I know from experience what it's like to have it one day and find it gone the next. And since my own growth is stimulated more readily in a growing fellowship, it makes the same sort of sense to apply my energy to that too. The satisfaction of seeing someone even newer to NA than myself come alive before my eyes is amazing. Knowing they heard about us at an H&I meeting or through a

radio announcement or from a counselor on our PI list makes the committee work worthwhile. Experiencing the growth of our base of recovery and the rising peak of freedom from addiction assures me that it works! But isn't there life beyond NA?

Sure. There always has been. And the disease of addiction has always prevented me from taking part in it, any part—I just took. It is not entirely incidental that as my service involvement grew so did my employability, my capacity for love, and my sense of belonging in this world. Where I was unable to accept responsibility, I've learned that my financial well-being depends upon that of the enterprise employing me. Where I could not deal with co-workers and job situations as they were, I've learned to address principles instead





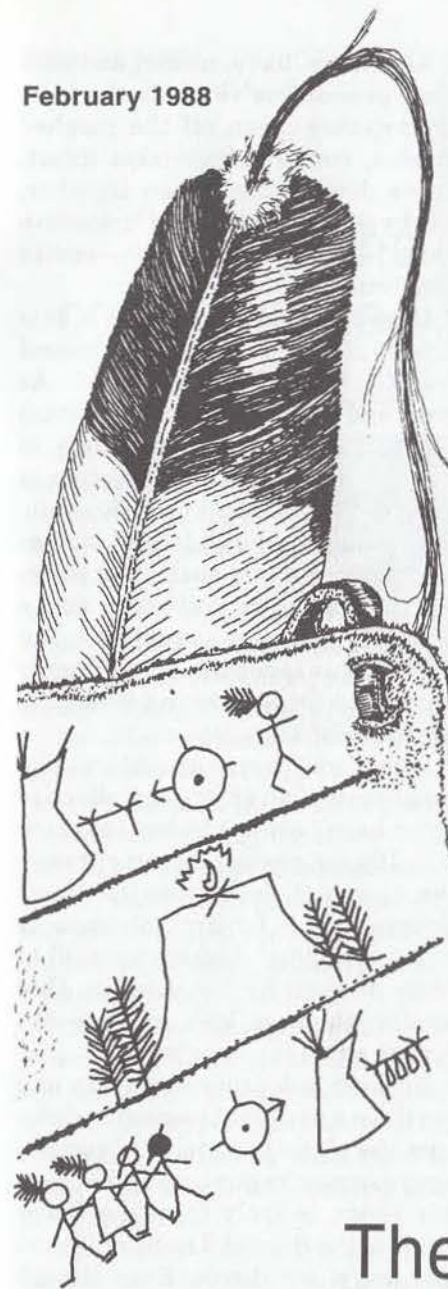
of personalities. I'm not necessarily right all the time, and I don't have to pretend that I am; I can be anonymous. I've learned that I cannot find my way alone, that I need people in my life. Where I've been afraid of emotional involvement, I've learned that honest attraction rather than self-promotion negates that fear—nothing hyped, no manipulative webs woven, nothing to hide or defend. I'm rejoining the human race.

I didn't become alienated from society in one day. Neither am I going to find full, healthy integration into the mainstream of things at once. But little by little I'm learning. NA traditions and service are teaching me how to live with others. The Power in this program is restoring me to balanced living (aka sanity).

But am I avoiding the question, this matter of life beyond NA? Addiction and its radical self-centeredness is still with me and needs regular treatment in order to stay in remission. Working a personal program, carrying our message addict-to-addict, and helping maintain the services that do that on a broader basis takes me away from me. My personal recovery depends on NA unity. If I wish to continue recovering, then there is a continuing role I must play in NA's unity. Life goes on all around my involvement in this fellowship. Service provides it with focus, identity, balance, and a center. For me, today, life isn't something waiting out there beyond NA. I'm living it, here and now, because of NA.

LM, Nevada

February 1988



The quest for a vision

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

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

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

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

Not until I stood alone on the dusty plateau, and in those first three steps humbly asked the Great Spirit for a vision, was there any hope. When I did, I began to see the connections

among the scattered bits of my life. I was granted that portion of the vision very early on. I saw that I had the disease of addiction and that this program had the solution for me. It was enough to keep me coming back.

With the first five steps I was granted much more vision and could see in greater detail the overall picture of my life up to that point. I had made a commitment in Step Three, and when I faced Step Six it was time to make it again, but this time with a twist. This time the commitment I was called upon to make was to a new vision, again not yet in view. I had enough vision now to see my past, but the future was still unclear.

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

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

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

Deep down inside every one of us is a vision of the Power that our Second Tradition calls "a loving God." As more and more of us seek spiritual growth, the operating principle in that Second Tradition becomes a natural dynamic in our fellowship. That loving God molds and shapes this fellowship and each of its members. The larger collective vision begins to gain life among us. Not until I began to see this could I really appreciate the depth and beauty of our traditions.

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

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

ME, Minnesota

August 1988

The computerized sponsor

It had been another long day at the office. I had been working endlessly on a project of my own—one computer program after another. I had been staring at those little screens for so long I thought I would go blind.

My office had become so automated in the last few years that few personnel remained for me to have conversations with during the course of the day. My lunches were taken alone. It wasn't until the evenings that I usually got to talk to someone, and that was at a meeting. I hadn't been to many of those of late.

Yes, I'm a recovering addict, and powerless over many things that occur around me daily. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to relax and unwind at a meeting with other addicts. But I'll go tomorrow, when I have more time.

The phone rings. It's my insurance agent. He's called to tell me that until he gets the correct chassis number off of my new car that I have no insurance. I run downstairs to find that my car has been stolen. No



chassis number, no insurance. I immediately call the police, feeling sure that they will be able to locate my car. It can't have been gone long.

The police arrive and place me under arrest for an old warrant. I manage to get bailed out, and when I arrive home via taxi I realize my wallet has been liberated of all its cash (I know these things never happen at police stations).

I'm sure my girlfriend is home, so I rush in the front door and find her in bed with my best friend. They both go screaming out the front door past the cab driver who is now certain I am a real loon. My piggy bank houses just enough to pay off the driver. Back inside I plop down in my favorite chair, which collapses under my weight

and deposits me spastically on the floor. I crawl to the phone and call the one number I know to find certain relief—my sponsor.

Rrring... rrring... "Well hello, this is George, your sponsor. I hope you've had a wonderful and enjoyable day; if you haven't, stay on the line for further instructions."

It can't be! It's a recording! My sponsor has taken on one too many sponsees, and now he's got a frigging recording.

"Remember," the recording continues, "no matter what, don't pick up, and go to meetings." I'll kill him! The tape

goes on. "If you're having problems with a relationship, press 1, followed by the #

sign. If you're having problems with money press 2, followed by the # sign. Lost your job, press 3, followed by the # sign."

I can't stand it. I'm losing my mind. I run to the nearest meeting, which should be starting any time now. I can hear people sharing as I approach the door. Ahhh—the warmth, the love, the caring. I burst through the door,

only to find the chairs full of computers all hooked up to each other. "Mary" is sharing with the group about her new way of life, and there's not a soul in the room but me.

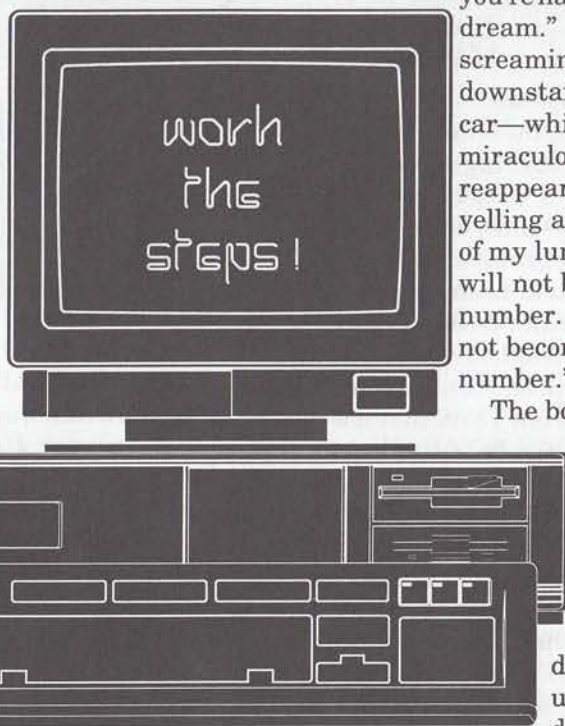
I sit on the doorstep and begin to cry. I feel a slight tug on my shoulder and look up to see my boss standing over me. "Russ, Russ, wake up,

you're having a bad dream." I run screaming downstairs to my car—which has miraculously reappeared—yelling at the top of my lungs, "I will not become a number. I will not become a number."

The boss turns slowly and smiles knowingly as he reaches down under my desk,

pulling out the tape which is just ending, "... if you're having a problem with an amends, press 9, followed by the # sign..." He sighs, saying to no one in particular, "I suppose his sponsor knew what he was doing when he gave me this tape." The tape label reads, "One crazy way to get Russ to a meeting."

SR, Florida



April 1989

Oldtimer's disease

Time of onset

At any time during recovery. The disease has been observed in its beginning stages as early as a few months into recovery, when it is sometimes referred to as "the ninety-day wonder condition." It is, however, more common among persons with many years in the program. Indeed, some researchers suspect that the longer people are in recovery, the greater the risk of the disease occurring.

Symptomology

Among those who have contracted the disease, certain behaviors and attitudes routinely occur. Since no single one of them necessarily indicates the presence of oldtimer's disease but may, instead, point to some related or associated condition, the following list should be used to diagnose oneself rather than other persons. Principal symptoms include:

- Infrequent attendance at NA meetings. Excuses: meetings are not the way they used to be, or are boring, or do not have good recovery because of the presence of so many newcomers;

- When speaking at meetings, reminding those present of the length of one's time in the program. Such reminders can be obvious or subtle. They may even be preceded by assurances of gratitude to those who helped one to achieve recovery;

- Refusal to get, or to use, a sponsor. This is often explained by the observation that no individual can be found whose recovery is longer than one's own—which indicates a confusion between quality of recovery and quantity of recovery;

- Complaints (privately expressed) that NA is not as it used to be, or has been watered down, or is in serious danger of becoming ineffective, in part because of all the new people coming in;

- The belief that one is the definitive interpreter of and authority on the Basic Text, the steps, and the traditions, and thus is the savior of NA from its less enlightened members;

- Preaching the message (often with the index finger upraised) rather than sharing experience, strength, and hope. This symptom can show itself in a variety of ways. For example, frequently beginning sentences with "You should" or "You need to" instead of "I did" or "I am doing";

- ☛ Resentment if one is not called upon at a meeting, and resentment against those who have been called upon to speak. Special resentment is reserved for the person chairing the meeting;
- ☛ Referring constantly to one's past struggles, defeats, and triumphs. Only in the rarest of instances is there any reference to present problems. Behind this lies the belief that, granted one's years of recovery, one ought not have any current problems. There is, in addition, the fear of admitting that one's life is not always wonderful and joyous might damage the effectiveness of NA in the eyes of newcomers.

Cause of disease

Pride and fear.

Treatment

Depending on the severity of the individual case, one or more of the following will probably prove effective:

- ☛ Frequent meetings: daily for one to three months, if possible;
- ☛ Involvement with a strong, insightful, available sponsor, especially one with extensive experience working with newcomers or potential relapsers;
- ☛ Reworking the steps, beginning with Step One, with special emphasis on Steps Three and Eleven;

- ☛ Listening carefully at meetings. The practice of listening is greatly enhanced by the decision not to speak at meetings, even if called upon, thus freeing one from having to prepare what one wishes to say while others are speaking;
- ☛ Volunteering for service, including coffeemaking, setting up and taking down chairs, general cleaning up after meetings;
- ☛ Making sincere efforts to bring the symptoms of the disease to an end. For example: resisting the tendency to remind others of one's recovery date; focusing on oneself rather than on others; speaking about "how it is" rather than "how it was"; making a gratitude list; asking those in one's home group for their help and support in one's struggle against oldtimer's disease.

Prognosis

Left untreated, the disease can cause serious problems in its victim's spiritual life and in his relationships with other people.

In extreme cases, the disease may lead to a return to using and to death.

With treatment, the victim can be restored to good spiritual health, characterized by gratitude to a loving God for the gift of recovery, freely given.

JC, New York

November 1989

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 it 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 fifty 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 again if you don't want to.

Anonymous

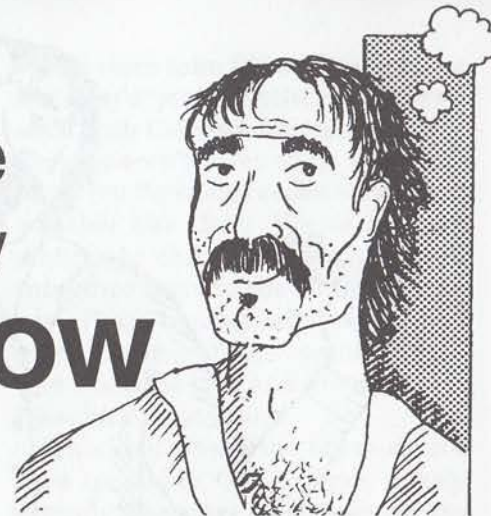
With apologies to *Am I an Addict?*

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November 1989

The thirty-day glow



Oftentimes I am amazed by the subtle ways some of the most meaningful messages of recovery are conveyed. They come in many forms and places, but I find these messages most prevalent in our meetings. That's why I attend regularly as is suggested in our Basic Text. I must search these meetings for recovery just as I searched the cesspools of addiction for drugs. Recently, I received a very powerful message at a meeting when my anger and stubbornness attempted to prevent me from getting what I need. In other words, I brought my body to the meeting, and my mind soon followed... in spite of myself.

Ridiculous?! Let me share this experience with you.

Earlier that same day it was necessary for me to transfer a small sum of my own money from one family residence to another. At eight months clean, I willingly surrender the wages of my labor for safekeeping (keeping

it safe from me). Even a small sum could become a large threat to my recovery if it is not handled properly.

I have defined "handled properly" as anyone other than myself handling it. Recognizing and admitting my own fears and weakness in this area, I humbly asked my sponsor and my family to help me do what I am unable to do for myself.

I became angered at the very thought of my situation. A thirty-five-year-old man, clean from the horrors of active addiction for eight months, and still not feeling strong enough to handle my own money.

I took my anger to a meeting that same day and refused to hug or acknowledge anyone. I wanted to be miserable. I wanted to wallow in my own self-pity and I wasn't about to let one of you good, caring addicts drain my private tub of anger, so I almost immediately de-seated myself and went into the coffee room to sulk in privacy.

By order of fate, I think, a newcomer addict interrupted my pathetic



attempt at self-pity. About one minute into my misery session in the coffee room, he soared in like the "Road Runner" to get a cup, periodically peeking toward the door as if he were going to miss a piece of recovery.

He noticed me slouched against the counter, hands in pockets, with a look that said "don't ask." He quickly asked if I were okay. I abruptly answered "yeah." He responded with, "My name is _____, what's yours?" In a sharp tone I told him. The newcomer then motioned for a hug and I declined. He could see that I was troubled, but he was unable to get through to me. After a couple of more rounds of one-sided conversation about the coffee selection and the man in the moon, this newcomer turned to me and said "I just picked up my thirty-day chip and I feel good."

There it was—the message of recovery staring me in the face. I needed to see this "newcomer glow."

As I identified with him, my self-centered anger subsided and passed. Suddenly, it didn't really matter who handled my money if the end result was a clean day. I remembered how it was when I got thirty consecutive days clean. The flutter of my heart, the sparkle in my eye, even trumpets seemed to sound as I took that applause-laden walk down the NA aisle to the thirty-day chip.

For years the only way I was able to achieve thirty consecutive days clean was when a judge said "thirty days" or more. If you can remember that thirtieth clean day, then you know how grateful I became at that moment. If you have yet to experience that day, just keep coming back clean and you will.

I congratulated the newcomer and asked him to please come again. I thank God for reminding me of the thirty-day glow through this newcomer.

Anonymous

On taking back the Twelfth Step

I got clean at a time—over two decades ago—when a newcomer was a real, not rare, commodity. The focus of the whole room was on that one person. Usually some other recovering addict brought him or her to that first meeting.

Addicts were not referred to us by hospitals, judges, psychiatrists, and the like. We were not trusted and had no credibility in the professional community.

What was significant back then with twelfth-step work was that there was a lot down-and-dirty contact with the addict who still suffered. A twelve-step call was when you went to the place where another addict was. We often tried to avoid going into someone's house or apartment because of the possibility of us all getting busted by the police. But we would meet them. We would tell them our stories, what we were like, how we got clean, and how we stay clean. Depending on what they were using and how sick they were, we

would often take them home with us and they'd "jones" on the couch. We'd stick with them sometimes in shifts. There weren't a lot of us clean addicts, but for some reason we worked together like that. We would take addicts to their first meeting and introduce them to the road of recovery. Those who actually "made it"—stayed clean and kept coming back—had a special love and gratitude for Narcotics Anonymous.

This kind of twelfth-step work still goes on today, though not nearly enough. There are many members in NA today who have never experienced a twelfth-step call in its original form. The reason, in my opinion, is that the face of the twelfth-step call has changed, and with that change a dramatic shift has occurred.

That change has to do with the advent of "treatment." The coming of treatment centers brought tremendous blessings. Finally the addict was validated as a sick, suffering human being who needed help. Detox was available when before we would have to feed some booze to addicts who were "kicking" just to get a hospital to care for them under the guise that they were drunks; otherwise we couldn't handle them if they went into convulsions due to kicking barbiturates. In most places today an addict doesn't have to die kicking a habit.

At first treatment didn't affect our twelfth-step calls noticeably. Their programs consisted of "take an addict in, detox them, and get them involved with NA." Most addicts got to treatment as a result of recovering

addicts taking them there in order for them to have a place to stay and buy a little time. Eventually these programs started to expand and they began to become a little more professional. Helped by counselors and therapists who are skilled and educated, today there are at least one or two highly proficient programs in every major city in the US. Addicts began to get their first initial contact with Narcotics Anonymous as a result of their reaching out for help to a treatment program. Their first "ah-ha," or realization of who and what they were, was the direct result of some group session or one-to-one talk with their counselor.

Naturally their gratitude would be focused on that institution, just as mine was focused on Narcotics Anonymous as the result of another recovering addict giving me my first "ah-ha."

I think it is no surprise to anyone in NA that most of the newcomers we see at meetings are there because of treatment, and that it is no more shocking that very few of them are still at our meetings after ninety days. This is a bare-ass fact. I've done it, and for sure many of us have done it: We've ignored them. We have basically turned the twelfth-step call over to professionals.

Where this has really hurt us as a fellowship is the fact, in my opinion, that we are not nearly as strong and unified as we should or could be. Most of the disunifying controversies that are going on around our fellowship have almost nothing to do with the addict who is still suffering.

I want to offer a solution. It's not as exciting as publishing your own copy of the Basic Text or starting your own WSO, but it will definitely save hundreds and thousands of lives. It's time we took back the responsibility of the twelfth-step call. We can start by contacting our local treatment center and ask for the opportunity to talk to a new addict. If we do it in pairs, it's more effective. Tell them our stories, how we got clean, how we stay clean. Tell them that we would like to meet them at their first NA meeting. Give them some literature, stay in contact with them throughout their stay in treatment. Offer to take them to their first meeting after they get out of treatment, introduce them around the room, be available as sponsors.

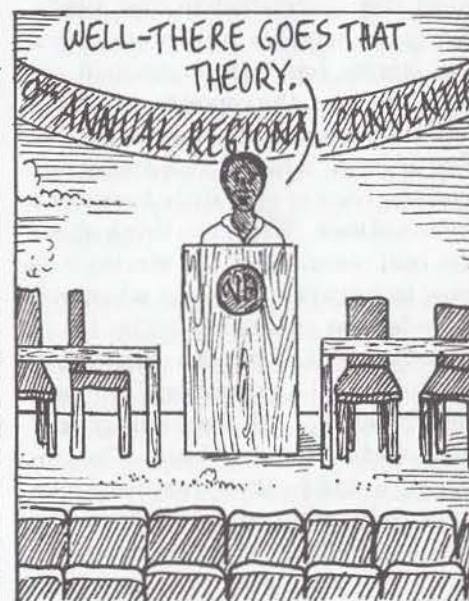
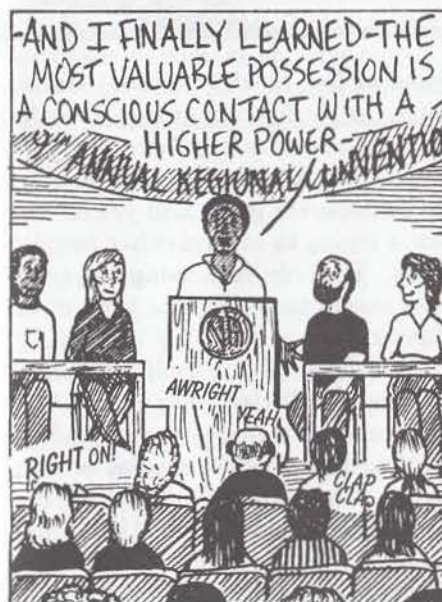
I would seriously like to invite comments on this subject. This is the kind of discussion that we really need. If Narcotics Anonymous works, then we have to ask ourselves why it isn't working for so many. Has it got anything to do with us and the job we do?

Treatment is about treatment. It allows an addict to buy some time. Treatment professionals try to knock down the denial system, they educate and teach some coping skills. They can't do what we do: offer continuing recovery from the disease of addiction. They can't carry our message, least of all deliver it. Only one addict helping another can do that. We need to build a bridge. My solution is just one—there is so much more we can do. It works if we work it.

TM, Hawaii

Home Group

Priorities



Newsletters

September 1988



Powerless Pooh

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

Let's face it. Pooh is a card-carrying, fully paid-up member of our very own fraternity. All the hallmarks of classic addiction are there. The isolation, living in that tree the whole time, only going out when his main enabler, Piglet, comes 'round to see him. The paranoia! Pooh is fright-

ened of the most irrational things, such as fictitious animals called Heffalumps. The false humility! Pooh constantly runs himself down as far as brainpower goes, and yet he's always trying to control other people's lives. Forcibly rehousing Eeyore is just one example of this kind of behavior.

And what about Pooh's relationship with Christopher Robin? A codependent if ever I saw one, and a child to boot. Pooh even goes so far as to let Christopher Robin drag him downstairs by the paw. I am sure plenty of us can identify with that! As I see it, it's when Tigger arrives in the Three Acre Wood that Pooh's addiction really reaches a chronic stage. There's a lot of "yets" for all of us contained in this little episode. Pooh drags Tigger around the place getting him to sample a whole load of drugs—nettles, thistles, grass, even Pooh's own drug of choice—until eventually he foists the poor beast on an unmarried mother who already has a child of her own to feed. I refer, of course, to Kanga.

Naturally, it's in relation to his drug of choice that we see Pooh's addiction in full spate. During the flood that strikes the Three Acre Wood, Pooh knows that he only has a limited supply, but his increasing tolerance gets the better of him and

he consumes the lot! Even when he finds a jar of something he's not quite sure about, he experiments until it's all gone. It isn't the honey that's to blame. We all know there's nothing intrinsically harmful about the stuff. The disease is within Pooh himself. Let's face it: Pooh is powerless.

Anonymous

September 1988

The Twelve Steps for intellectuals

From *The Rolling Paper*, the Phoenix, Arizona area newsletter: And now, for allayouse what are too smart fer yer own good, General Gratitude and Captain Clean present an intellectual version of the steps (along with the straight skinny).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I bravely compose and prepare a critical examination of my principles of right and wrong, and their acting upon my mind, character, and will by reflectively itemizing my past actions and behaviors. (Made a list of all the ways I have tried to play God.)

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

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

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

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

I am wholly prepared for the action of the Supreme Reality to eliminate every one of these faults in my complex of mental and ethical traits.

(Became ready to do and be different.)

7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

I unpretentiously request and invite the Supreme Reality to eliminate the self-destructive aspects of my mental and ethical traits.

(Begged it to make me different, regardless of my opinion.)

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

I here compose a simple series of names of every one of the individuals to whom I had caused physical, mental, or emotional injury and voluntarily, without reluctance, am prepared to compensate every one of these individuals for their injury or loss.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

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

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

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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

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

Anonymous

Relating to Ennay

From *Lifeline*, the Palm Coast, Florida area newsletter: It was at my home group that I first met Ennay (his real name has been changed for the sake of anonymity). After entering the room, he slowly meandered toward the coffee pot, tilting his head in the direction of his meander. It was this walk that had made it quite clear to me that he was a typical airhead.

The back of Ennay's button-down shirt needed the heavy touch of a steam iron, his pants gave him the image of Mr. Greenjeans, and his hair could have won a Pee Wee Herman look-alike contest. In general, Ennay was not my kind of man.

I definitely had Ennay pegged as a loser when he shared, with long pauses between every few words, in that rasping voice. Since I had been told to stick with the winners, I knew what I had to do. I had to keep my distance from this guy in the hopes that no one would see me with him.

A few weeks later I had a devastating emotional experience that tore at my serenity. I had to make the choice that day not to pick up a drug, and to

use the tools of my recovery instead. I tried to call everyone I knew in the program that might have been home. I had no luck at all and was soon desperate. It was this urgency that prompted me to find the crumpled note with an unknown telephone number that I had put in my desk drawer several weeks before.

Keeping this nameless phone number must surely have been the workings of my Higher Power. The voice on the line was a guy with an excellent recovery. Even though his voice was slow and rasping, I was focused on his grasp of the program. This guy was my kind of person. I could relate to him almost like he was my twin. With all my shining impulsiveness, I told him I wanted to meet with him, and quickly set up a time and place at that night's meeting.

Had this day worked out well or what? I had established a tie with a super recovering addict. I could see the smoke coming from my head already, as is common when I become obsessive or impulsive.

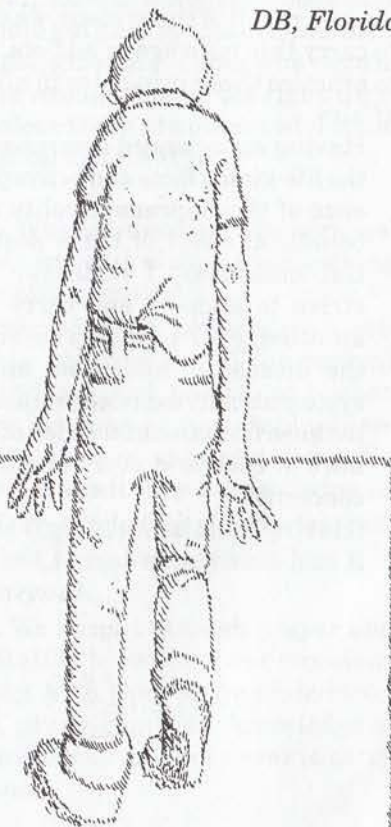
On taking my prearranged seat in the meeting room, I searched hard for this superhero but found him nowhere. Then, to further my disappointment, good old Ennay took the seat alongside of me, right where my superhero was to sit.

Ennay greeted me with a big hug and a smile to let me

know he cared. When he asked if I was in a better space than I was in earlier that day, it hit me like a cold towel in the face. This was my NA hero, Ennay himself.

After processing my confusion and guilt, I realized that HP had given me a multi-lesson in comparing, prejudice, humility, and acceptance. Ennay is now an important part of my support group, and I love him dearly. Today I have gratitude for Narcotics Anonymous and its program of recovery. I am three years clean now, and I thank God for all these gifts and choices I have in my new life.

DB, Florida



Comin'up

Calendar											
		1	2	3	4	5					
6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
13	14	15	16	17	18	19					
20	21	22	23	24	25	26					
27	28	29	30	31							

ARIZONA: July 15-17, 1994; 3rd California Arizona Nevada Area Convention; Laughlin; info (602) 754-4260; CANAC-3, PO Box 1085, Bullhead City, AZ 86442

ARKANSAS: Mar. 12-13, 1994; 1st Northwest Arkansas Area Convention; Fort Smith, AR; info (501) 783-2766; rsvns. (800) 356-7046; Convention Committee, PO Box 23, Lowell, AR 72745

CALIFORNIA: Mar. 3-6, 1994; 16th Northern California Regional Convention; Oakland; rsvns. (800) 338-1338; NCCNA-16, PO Box 3592, Danville, CA 94526

2) Mar. 26, 1994; Southern California Regional H&I Learning Day; Hacienda Hgts; info (818) 359-0084 or (818) 357-9258; RSO, 1935 S Myrtle Ave, Monrovia, CA 91016

3) June 10-12, 1994; San Diego/Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego; info (619) 272-7005; rsvns. (619) 239-4500; SDICRSO-CC, 2260 El Cajon Blvd #184, San Diego, CA 92104

4) June 11, 1994; Westside Area Birthday Meeting & Dance; Culver City; info (310) 452-3204

5) June 12, 1994; Westside Area Bluesfest; Culver City; info (310) 202-9017; Bluesfest line (310) 306-7108

CANADA - BRITISH COLOMBIA: May 27-29, 1994; 14th Spring Clean Gambier Island Campout; info (604) 322-5967 or (604) 732-1689; VASC, PO Box 1695 Stn A, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6C 2P7

CANADA - ONTARIO: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 1st Northwestern Ontario Area Convention; Thunder Bay; info (807) 343-9100; rsvns. (800) 267-2675; NOACNA-1, PO Box 3507, Thunder Bay, Ontario Canada, P7B 6E2

FLORIDA: May 27-30, 1994; 4th Gold Coast Area Convention; Pompano Beach; info (305) 832-9518; GCNA-4, PO Box 23325, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

2) Oct. 6-9, 1994; 2nd South Florida Regional Convention; Fort Myers; info (813) 575-7751 or (305) 445-4606; SFRCNA-2, PO Box 70155, FT Lauderdale, FL 33307

GEORGIA: Mar. 31 - Apr. 3, 1994; 13th Georgia Regional Convention; Atlanta; GRCNA-13, PO BOX 190974, Atlanta, GA 31119

HAWAII: Mar. 25-27, 1994; 10th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; info (808) 676-7763; Oahu Gathering Committee, PO Box 75271, Honolulu, HI 96836

IDAHO: May 20-22, 1994; 5th Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Idaho Falls;; Convention Committee, PO Box 3704, Idaho Falls, ID 83403-3704

ILLINOIS: Mar. 4-6, 1994; 6th Chicago Regional Convention; Chicago; info (708) 848-2211; rsvns. (800) 445-8667

2) May 27-30, 1994; 8th Kickapoo River Run Primary Purpose Area Campout; rsvns. (217) 351-1678; helpline (217) 373-2063

INDIANA: Mar. 4-6, 1994; Indiana State Convention; Indianapolis; info; ISNAC, PO Box 17106, Indianapolis, IN 46217-0106

KANSAS: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 11th Mid-America Regional Convention; Great Bend, info (316) 343-7740 or (913) 823-3854; MARCNA-11, PO Box 242, Salina, KS 67402-0242

KENTUCKY: Apr. 1-3, 1994; 8th Kentucky Regional Convention; Louisville; hotel (800) 333-3333; KRCNA-8, PO Box 14271, Louisville, KY 40214-0271

LOUISIANA: May 27-29, 1994; 12th Annual Louisiana Regional Convention; Alexandria; rsvns. (318) 442-9000, (800) 523-9724; LRCNA-12, Program Committee, PO Box 762, Montgomery, LA 71454

MARYLAND: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 8th Annual Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City, MD; rsvns. (800) 654-5440; CPRC-8 Conv Committee, PO Box 44490, Fort Washington, MD 20749-4490

2) Sep. 1-4, 1994; WCNA-24; Need main speakers, clean time requirement—5 years, deadline—Jan. 31, 1994; workshop speakers needed, deadline—Apr. 1, 1994; submit tapes to; WCNA-24, c/o WSO Inc., PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

MASSACHUSETTS: Mar. 4-6, 1994; Just For Today Group Cape Cod Convention; Hyannis, MA; info (508) 540-4505 or (508) 563-5715; JFTCC, PO Box 590, N Falmouth, MA 02556

MICHIGAN: Mar. 31, - Apr. 3, 1994; 2nd Detroit Area Convention; Detroit; info (313) 361-4214; rsvns. (800) 228-3000; DACNA, Tickets and Registrations, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

MINNESOTA: Apr. 22-24, 1994; 1st Minnesota Regional Convention; Saint Paul; info (612) 926-7341; MNNAC-I, PO Box 14152, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0152

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Mar. 12, 1994; 2nd Multiregional Learning Day; Fitzwilliams; helpline (603) 432-0166; Learning Day 2, PO Box 1752, Portland, ME 04108

2) June 24-26, 1994; 4th Granite State Area Fellowship in Field Campout; Bethlehem; helpline (603) 432-0166; Campout 4, PO Box 4354, Manchester, NH 03108

NEW JERSEY: Aug. 19-21, 1994; 4th Northern New Jersey Regional Convention; Parsippany

NEW MEXICO: Mar. 25-27, 1994; 5th Rio Grande Regional Convention; Albuquerque; info (505) 836-2329; rsvns. (505) 869-6574; M G, 13 Church Road, Peralta, NM 87042

NEW YORK: May 20-22, 1994; 9th Greater New York Convention; info (718) 398-0012; rsvns. (800) 431-3850

NORTH CAROLINA: Mar. 18-21, 1994; 7th N Carolina Capital Area Family Reunion; Raleigh, NC; info (919) 755-5391; rsvns. (919) 872-2323; NCCAFR-7, c/o Dickie A., PO Box 818, Carrboro, NC 27510

2) Apr. 22-24, 1994; Greater Charlotte Area Convention; hotel (704) 525-8350 or (800) 847-7829; Bound for Freedom, 1620 S Boulevard, Suite A, Charlotte, NC 28203

3) May 20-22, 1994; 4th Twin City Area Convention; Winston-Salem; rsvns. (800) 325-3535; Twin City Area Convention, PO Box 12475, Winston-Salem, NC 27117-2475

OHIO: May 27-19, 1994; 12th Annual Ohio Convention; The Ohio convention is in Kentucky, five minutes from downtown Cincinnati; info (513) 820-2947; OCNA-12, PO Box 0541, Cincinnati, OH 42501-0541

OKLAHOMA: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 8th Oklahoma Regional Convention; Oklahoma City; info; OKRCNA-8, PO Box 804, Bethany, OK 73008-0804

OREGON: May 6-8, 1994; Mid-Willamette Valley Area Convention; rsvns. (503) 370-7888; ASC, PO Box 13232, Salem, OR 97309

TENNESSEE: May 20-22, 1994; 6th Multiregional Bar-B-Que and Campout; Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, North of Memphis; rsvns. (901) 452-1091

UNITED KINGDOM: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 5th London Convention; Holland Park School, London; LCNA-5, PO Box 1980, London, England, N19 3LS

UTAH: Mar. 11-13, 1994; 1st Northern Utah Area Convention; Ogden; info (801) 744-0269 or (801) 621-8348; NUACNA-1, PO Box 242, Ogden, UT 84402

WASHINGTON: Apr. 15-17, 1994; 9th Washington/N Idaho Regional Convention; Spokane; rsvns. (800) 547-8010; WNRCNA-9, PO Box 9245, Spokane, WA 99209

WEST VIRGINIA: May 6-8, 1994; 11th West Virginia Convention; Ripley; info (800) 766-4442; rsvns (304) 372-7860; Mountaineer RSC, PO Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381

WISCONSIN: Apr. 15-17, 1994; 9th Mid-Coast Convention; Delavan; info; MCC-9, PO Box 1621, Janesville, WI 53545

WYOMING: Sep. 23-25, 1994; Unity Convention; 3 speakers needed, respond by February; info (307) 789-7746; Unity Convention, 855 Sundance Ave, Evanston, WY 82930

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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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My gratitude speaks when I care
and when I share with others the
NA way.

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit 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. This is
a program of complete
abstinence from all drugs. There
is only one requirement for
membership, the desire to stop
using. We suggest that you keep
an open mind and give yourself a
break. 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.



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