

# THE **NA Way** MAGAZINE<sup>®</sup>

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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.

Twelve Steps reprinted for adaptation by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

## THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

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# From the editor



## Letters to the editor

Want to comment on practices and policies of *The NA Way*? Got a gripe about editorial content? Or maybe you loved a particular piece of art? Tell us about it. Anything goes except profanity or inaccuracies presented as truth. We'll print your comments in this column. Please write us at:

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## Both sides of the story

Dear editor,

I read the article from the person on the whirlwind tour about Russia (April 1994 *NA Way*) and his or her impressions of NA in the Eastern block. I thought the article was pretty good and I was impressed that you allowed the stuff about AA being necessary for addicts' survival at this point. Good for you.

However, of deep concern to me is the point discussed about AA asking addicts to leave the meeting in St. Petersburg. As you know (or maybe you don't) that very same incident sparked enough emotion in me to write an article for *The NA Way* when it happened in 1992.

I started NA in Moscow. I'm on the literature committee for Russian translations. I pass out starter kits and help spread the NA message in Russia. Because of all this, I feel qualified to write about what's going on in our fellowship in Russia.

When the incident happened, the group phoned me immediately—me being the resident expert, so to speak—and it was over the very next day. What concerns me is that *The NA Way* has printed something that is inflammatory toward AA—those mean old AA folks who want to kick out the addicts—as opposed to a more comprehensive and truthful account of the situation: *The controversy between fellowships kills addicts in other countries*. Addicts in countries outside the US need AA right now and we ought to thank our lucky stars that we have them to rely on while we grow outside the US.

When you rejected my article, I expanded it and included even more AA stuff and it was published in three recovery-oriented papers. It explores the destructiveness of the controversy from both sides, the ugliness in AA and the ugliness in NA and the fact that the ugliness kills us.

I feel that your policies about what you will or will not print are not so much based on what will help addicts apply principles and face the truth

about themselves, but what will make NA look good and, if possible, what will make other programs look less spiritual than ours. I ask you to truthfully question your editorial policies in relation to principles and spiritual growth. This magazine is our voice and I find it unbecoming that the voice seemingly expresses only one, fundamentalist view of NA.

I think we are bigger than that, and I think our common voice—the voice that expresses views beyond “approved” language—should not be stifled or censored.

SM, California

## Objects to editorial policies

Dear editor,

I am clean for over five years. I used drugs from the time I was sixteen to the age of forty-one. I spent one and a half years in prison for narcotics. I also drank alcohol from the time I was thirteen years old. I assume I qualify as both an addict and an alcoholic.

I was a subscriber to *The NA Way* for one year. I didn't renew my subscription after you mentioned that you edited out references to alcohol and “non-NA-idiomatic” words such as “sober” and “dry.”

I got clean in AA. I used drugs for the first month I was in AA. No one said anything to me except, “Keep coming back.” I got a sponsor and he told me that I would drink again if I continued to use drugs. He told me that, one day at a time, I could stop anything I wanted to. All I had to do was do the same thing I did to stop drinking. It worked.

I realized the need to keep alcohol separate from drugs in the meetings so the identification process could take place. There are some who never did one or the other and could not identify (alcohol in AA and drugs in NA).

Many people are multi-addicted. While at OA, we talk about food. What difference is there in the recovery? At GA, we talk about gambling. What difference is there in the recovery? The words of recovery are the same. Words such as “clean,” “sober,” “dry,” and “on the wagon” are for all recovery, not exclusive to any one group.

I went to both NA and AA in my early recovery. I chose AA because there was more recovery and people had more time and organization. NA was loud and not as spiritual. After three years I noticed there were many people who were addicts (never drank) recovering in AA. I asked them why they didn't go to NA. They said because the recovery is better in AA. I realized that I could share some of my recovery in the younger program—NA—and maybe help someone. I wanted to give back what had so freely been given to me. That was in my third year. I am now in my sixth year and go to both fellowships. I say I am an alcoholic in AA and an addict in NA.

I was so disturbed by NA's bias and attempt to make itself separate that I stopped my subscription to *The NA Way*. I still get the *AA Grapevine*. They do not edit out references to drugs. In one of the last issues of *The NA Way* I received, you mentioned an inventory-taking process. I hope you check out your motives. What was so



freely given to us was the right to adapt and reprint the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA. I love NA. One day it could be bigger than AA. However, learning from history, I believe that NA, in its attempt to be different, might be risking self-destruction. If it's not broken, don't fix it.

I guess the final straw that got me motivated to write this letter was the question now being discussed: "How do you feel about the language in the Twelve Steps and Traditions?" That language is what keeps me clean and sober. It has done so for others for fifty-nine years in AA. It is how NA got started. I don't need to fool with this deadly disease. It killed my brother and got me put in jail.

Let's give credit to the founders of the twelve-step program. It works if you work it. Let go and let G-d. Keep it simple. Don't fix it if it's not broke.

*EN, Florida*

### Coming soon—The 1995 NA Way

As a subscriber to *The NA Way Magazine*, you will be treated to a variety of special features in 1995. First and foremost, we plan to run reader's surveys as often as possible—we're committed to a minimum of four times next year. One will focus on what you think about the magazine, what you'd like to see more of, less of, what you think of our editorial policy, etc. Others will ask what you think about various topics of concern to NA as a whole. Topics we have planned include: "How should NA respond when someone steals the treasury?" "What do you think about opposite-gender sponsorship?" "How should NA respond to violence in

meetings?" As always, we'd be happy to hear any ideas you have for additional topics.

We also plan to print more local fellowship news. However, we need your help to do this. *Call us when something newsworthy happens in your group, area, or region!* Newsworthy events might include:

- A story about your area's learning day.

What happened there, topics addressed, entertainment or games played, or whatever else was special about the day.

- How your NA community is providing service, perhaps in a new or creative way.

Do you have a special way of helping hearing-impaired addicts, such as providing an American Sign Language interpreter?

Are all your phoneline slots filled? How did you accomplish this feat?

More ideas can be drawn from the feature titled, "Addicts Who Care" in the November 1994 *NA Way*.

- How your group, area, or region coped with a crisis. For instance: A natural disaster such as an earthquake, a hurricane or tropical storm, blizzards, etc.
- Or, perhaps you had several meetings at one facility and the facility closed. How did your meetings relocate? Or did they close?

All of the above ideas are only suggestions. If you have a story to tell, please call us at the World Service Office.

*CT, Associate Editor*

## My life with Sam

From what I've experienced, and heard from others, it seems pretty clear that we all experience the steps on different levels at different times in recovery. Lots of us balked when we saw that awful list on the wall at our first meetings. Admitting powerlessness, for proud ego-maniacs like us? Believing in a Higher Power, for skeptical souls such as we? Or turning our wills and lives over to that Power, for distrusting control freaks like most of us are? Not likely.

But in desperation we kept coming back, some of us figuring we could do it differently, others just ignoring the steps altogether. Initially we found that if we showed up, listened and shared a little, made coffee, maybe got a sponsor or made a friend or two, we could stay clean. Then it changed.

For some of us, the idea of the steps as a sort of road map for our new lives was attractive. For others, we just got worn down by our own discomfort or those awful gratitude stories we kept hearing the oldtimers share as they told us how essential the steps were in their lives.

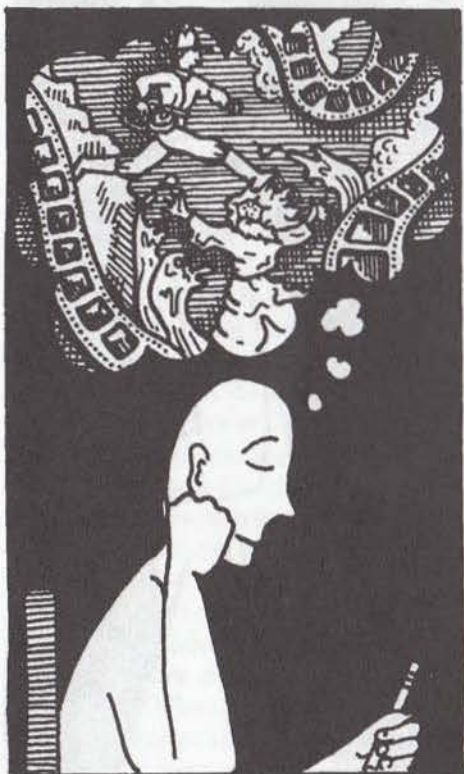
For me, the change came one Saturday night somewhere in the middle of my first year. I was sharing intensely. I was really on a roll about how I was feeling about this, having trouble with that, and couldn't understand the other thing. At the end of the meeting, a girl with eight years walked up behind me and whispered in my ear, "Your answers are in the steps." To this day I don't know who that person was; I never ran into her again. I wish I would, so I could thank her.





I set off to work the steps. Initially, when my whole life and thinking was centered in drugs in one form or another, so was my step work. My understanding of the First Step was how unmanageable my life got from using drugs. Jails, institutions, wrecked cars, lost jobs, ruined relationships, etc. And I was pretty clear about just how likely I was to use if I exposed myself to drug people, drug places, and drug things.

Today, it's very different. Now I'm the one whispering in ears and telling stories. I work out all kinds of situations through the steps, and I'm very grateful that I have people in my life who show me how to break through the oftentimes tough lan-



guage of the steps. They help me change my pictures of what the steps mean. It was those "movies in my mind" that were holding me back from knowing what the girl with eight years knew.

For instance, turning my will and my life over to the care of God made me think of Indiana Jones in *The Last Crusade*, having to take that leap of faith onto the invisible bridge. Remember that? Now, I don't know about you, but my spirituality is rarely on that kind of level. No shot at Step Three.

The Second Step, a Power greater than myself restoring me to sanity, now that was a tough one because, even with my humongous ego, I couldn't picture myself as being like Charlton Heston in *The Ten Commandments*. So much for Step Two. And powerless, my life unmanageable? Who do they think I am? Patty Duke doing Helen Keller on the floor in *The Miracle Worker*? No way. And so I went, off into the sunset, resistance increasing, with the whole foundation of our program crumbling into nothingness in my mind, and me along for the ride.

With the exception of my use of substances, where my program is pretty rigid, these are not the pictures I use today. They've been replaced by simpler, less dramatic, more practical ways of looking at the steps. For instance, let's say that today in my addiction I'm acting out on one of my old favorites—personalities before principles—and my focus is a guy we'll call Sam. Sam is annoying the heck out of me. Now, my whole

life and thinking can become centered in Sam in one form or another: how he works his program, what he shares, when he shows up or doesn't, and where, and with whom, etc. Now, I'm sick enough to start that dagger-tossing kind of sharing—you know, when you share very generally about something that you mean to direct specifically at that person you don't like in your home group. And I can gossip to others about Sam, go to sleep inventorying Sam, and wake up resenting Sam, all in the same twenty-four hours. Whew!

If I choose to work the steps, it can go something like this. It's obvious that I'm powerless over Sam. Sam is not magically going to work, share, come and go, with or without, and where, and in the ways that I want him to. So I'm powerless over Sam's behavior. I'm also powerless over whatever it is about Sam that's pushing my buttons; I don't have any idea what it is, and I don't need to. I'm not Freud or Jung, despite how smart I think I am. Furthermore, I'm powerless over this runaway process that I seem to be engaged in: this enthusiasm for obsessing about Sam, observing Sam, wondering about Sam, talking about Sam, even dreaming about Sam. And if all of this doesn't add up to some insane unmanageability, then I don't know what does.

All I've done so far is state the reality of the situation. What's been said is that Sam is going to do something, and I'm going to feel and think a certain way. I haven't accepted it, or justified it, or rationalized it, or worked it out, or changed it in any

way. I've only stated, with a little honesty, how I was powerless over Sam and how my life had become unmanageable as a result of trying to exert power and control over him. First Step worked.

*"Once I've opened  
my mind to  
some possible  
alternatives, I then  
purchase a ticket  
to visit God"*

An oldtimer once said, "The only thing that's important to understand about God is that there is one and you're not Him." The key thing there is that I'm not Him, or Her. I need to get outside of myself for this stuff to work. By now it should be clear to me that in active addiction, my way didn't work; even in recovery, like in this thing with Sam, my way doesn't seem to be working so wonderfully.

So, with just a little shred of open-mindedness, I begin to look around at some other people in the program. I skip past the Sams and take inventory of the winners. As I watch them, I come to believe that not everyone is having this problem with Sam. Not everyone is routinely experiencing my brand of insane unmanageability. And that maybe, just maybe, somewhere within the "everyone," there exists a better way. Someplace, perhaps, there is a rational solution to this thing with Sam that I'm going



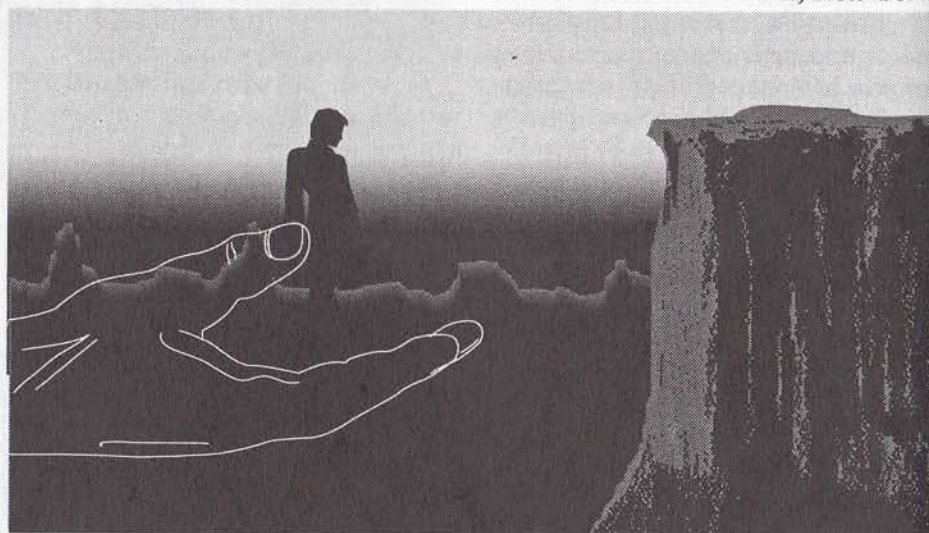
through. Someone may have an experience, a thought, or an idea, or God might speak or work through somebody, or something could possibly occur that will calm down my crazy thinking and help restore me to sanity. As you can see, this is also a step of imagination, and with not much more than a "perhaps," we have succeeded in second-stepping Sam pretty painlessly.

As far as the Third Step goes, I don't even try to do it Indian Jones style anymore. Once I've identified my problem honestly and opened my mind to some possible alternatives, I then purchase a ticket to visit God, as I understand Him, with my willingness. Mostly I just decide to make myself available to recovery. I can do this by sharing honestly at a meeting about what's been going on in my head, without mentioning Sam's name of course. People will probably share in response because they really do care when they hear honest shar-

ing. I might hear someone's experience with obsessive thinking, or how someone else dealt with a personality even more obnoxious than Sam's, or I may simply find that I have unloaded enough stuff just to feel better from the sharing itself. If I turn some of the pages in the Basic Text, I'm liable to find something helpful, something I can identify with. And if I turn to the phones, the guy on the other end will, at the very least, listen to me and let me listen to myself. Finally, if I turn to my sponsor, well, he cares enough about me that it's likely he will offer some suggestions or maybe tell me to write about it. The action of the Third Step is now in progress.

How many meetings we attend, how well we listen and take suggestions, how often we talk to our sponsor and support group, and how much we do the reading and writing of our program, absolutely will all come together to determine the quality of our new life, now that we have a choice.

BK, New York



## This side of sanity

Hi, my name is Sharon. I'm a grateful, recovering addict. *The NA Way Magazine* has inspired me to write and share my experience, strength, and hope. I have a couple of weeks left of this twenty months of incarceration. For twenty months I've not only been clean, but each day I've read NA literature, including my NA book. I've done my daily meditation and thanked my HP, who is God, for another day alive and clean. My life has changed. I have changed.

I'm the oldest of five, and I grew up in an abusive, alcoholic family. This I realize in hindsight. For most of my life, I believed I had grown up in a normal family.

As far back as I can remember, I've had addictive, compulsive behavior with men, drugs, and stealing. I got married when I was fifteen, and I'd had four babies by the time I was twenty-four. I chose husbands and partners who were abusive like my father, and addicts to boot. I never believed I deserved better.

After my children were born and I was on my second husband, I was introduced to heroin. The only pain I

felt for the next fifteen years was withdrawal, but on heroin I felt no regret or sadness about my past; day-to-day feelings were nonexistent. When I was growing up it was unacceptable to show emotions, so I really had little to work with in the first place. To support my habit I wrote bad checks and stole from stores. Eventually, I spent time in jail. I got out and went back to the same partner, the same lifestyle.

Thirteen years ago I was sent to prison, only to repeat my same patterns when I got out. Then four years later I was committed to prison a second time. When I got out that time I said, "Things will be different. I'll only drink beer." Little did I know that the beer would start me again on that same addictive cycle. I eventually went back to my husband and the same old thing. I was sick of life, sick of being sick, and I didn't like myself at all. I didn't want to live like that. I wanted to change but didn't know how or where to begin. I was thirty-eight years old.

Very soon after my self-disgust had reached this point, I walked into a store, picked something up, and walked out without paying for it. I was arrested and sent to jail. My most powerful feeling was one of relief! I wouldn't be out to meet my husband, who was to be released from jail the following day. I was a mess! I decided to admit my addiction to the judge. I couldn't go on living like I had been anymore. The judge gave me a break: a year in jail followed by six months in a drug program. I was introduced to NA and told that I never



had to use again. I learned so much in that program about myself and drug addiction. I learned that I had to go to NA meetings and that NA worked if I worked it. I was told that I had to work just as hard at recovering as I worked at staying loaded. I began to believe in miracles. I started to trust God.

I got out of the drug program and I was afraid. Within a couple of months I went back to my husband, who was using. Though I had read the Basic Text chapter on "Recovery and Relapse" many times, I didn't fully understand relapse and the consequences of using again. I learned through experience.

I used for five months, all the while knowing I was slowly dying. All I needed to do was reach out for help, but I didn't. I felt more hopeless than I had ever felt. I felt like a failure, and many times I didn't want to live. My spirit was closed. I resorted to moving in with a connection so I wouldn't have to support my habit illegally. The coke and heroin took over my thinking. One morning I woke up and looked at the person laying next to me. He looked dead and I had to touch him to make sure he was breathing. He was as alive—or as dead—as I was. That instant I prayed to God to help me help myself.

Within a couple of days I went up north to my daughter's house to kick. By this time I had a warrant for my arrest because I had stopped reporting to my probation officer. When I was well enough to travel, I went back home intending to turn myself in. I spent time with my kids and

mom, knowing my next stop would be prison. It was the consequence I chose when I picked up that first drug. Now I was ready to face the consequences of my actions. I was scared when the police came to pick me up at gun point, but I also felt relief; it was finally over, and I had managed to stay clean. For those ten days at home, the memory of having kicked was fresh in my mind.

After a week in jail I went to court for probation revocation. I made it clear that I didn't want to go back into a drug program. I needed time—time to think and get my priorities straight. I got time alright: four years in state prison.

For the first two months I completely lost touch with reality. I thought that I had been shot when the police picked me up. I thought I was in a coma and that my waking life was a dream, or maybe a nightmare. I shared my feelings with someone and she said, "This is reality, Sharon. You're going through acute post-withdrawal symptoms." Then I got scared. I had never been so out of control before. I had always felt that my mind was intact, no matter what abuse I had piled on it. That's when I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity, and he did! I had also made the decision to turn my will and life over to God. I got involved in NA. There were meetings in prison, and I went.

After some time I got into a fire camp program. I have been here for sixteen months. We have people come in for meetings once a week, and if I'm not working on a fire I'm at that

meeting, no matter how tired I am. I've stuck with the winners throughout the past twenty months. I live and breathe recovery.

While I was writing in my journal the other day, I thought about change and decided I was grateful to be alive.

I had been reflecting on the year that just passed and was trying to think of any of bad prison habits I may have picked up. I came to the conclusion that the habits I've picked up are good ones. I have good work habits: no sick days in twenty months. I've learned good communication skills. I've had a

change of attitude. I've learned acceptance, and how to apply the Twelve Steps in my life. I've got good communication with God, and I'm learning, one day at a time, to do His will. I've become unselfish and I care about others. I've gotten into the habit of reading NA literature every day, including *The NA Way*, and the *Just For Today* daily meditation book. I've learned to live just for today, for today is all I have right now. I worked

hard this year on not procrastinating. How? I just did it—did whatever, without putting it off. I've become more assertive. I share my feelings at every meeting. I'm learning what I really want, and I've learned to let go of what I don't need.



I've grown from many experiences, good and bad. Today I have a better perspective on my life. I know what spirituality is because I finally have it. I've learned to listen to my body. I sleep when I'm tired and slow down when my mind or body feels over loaded. I've learned so much because I finally got out of myself and became aware of what's

around me: life and beauty, things I'm a part of today.

I owe it all to my HP, whom I call God. He helped me believe in myself. He's shown me a better way. I'm anxious to get out and apply what I've learned. I believe it doesn't matter where you are, free or locked up. Recovery is possible if you're willing to do what it takes. Today I'm happy, serene, and a living miracle.

SS, California



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## HIV and AIDS: let's talk about it

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These thoughts that you shall read have been generated by the article, "HIV and AIDS in NA" (November 1993 *NA Way*).

First of all, this is an update from an article I wrote for the November 1987 *NA Way*. I was diagnosed with the "dreaded virus" in October 1987. At first I thought, "Oh my God! No one will ever love me again. I'll get sick and die alone from hug deprivation."

Back then, no one with a positive diagnosis spoke of it. There were people in this area testing positive, but *talk about it!!!* Hell no! Fear and lack of knowledge kept them in the closet. We were scorned, and denial was really prevalent. We heard things like "Better them than me" or "That will never happen to me now that I'm clean." Even worse were the subtle messages of shame we got, as if we hadn't beaten ourselves enough!

I knew I had to share, or else I was going to use or curl up and wither away from other people's ignorance.

I figured it this way. I paid my dues—shot dope and did my thing—and now that I had three years in this program no one was going to run me out because of their ignorance and fear.

I came to meetings and began to educate others indirectly. I was extremely afraid of being rejected. At that time, I was also embarking on a career as a counselor, and God forbid "this terrible thing" should come out. (As it turned out, my employers and co-workers have been extremely supportive.)

Thanks to some wonderful people in this area, exactly five groups for people living with chronic illnesses have been formed. I believed from that time on, and started letting you know, that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another was truly without parallel. I was here already and didn't intend to go anywhere else. I didn't need to fight. You would either accept me—the whole package—or not. Either way I'm here for the duration. I've got places to see, people to meet, and much, much more to conquer.

Today, a little over six years after my diagnosis and nine years gifted with recovery and choices, I honestly believe that I am still clean because of NA's support and understanding.

To those of you who are scared of the virus, think about this: If the Twelve Steps can teach you to live clean, maybe, just maybe, they can help you overcome your fear. Educate yourselves about HIV and AIDS. That way, you can truly practice these principles in all your affairs.

*LW, Pennsylvania*



## Sought by grace

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I've wrestled with God throughout my recovery. I was very angry at the world when I first got clean. When people would talk about being grateful, I thought that they were crazy.

Eventually, through consistently coming back to meetings and not taking that first drug, I began to feel more comfortable admitting that I was an addict.

I began to sense that I had survived my active addiction, and I slowly started to feel grateful in spite of myself. I could no longer deny that my life as a member of Narcotics Anonymous was a whole lot better than it had been before.

My first strong feeling of gratitude did not emerge until I had about ten months clean. I was at a meeting, and we had a break. For the first time I felt the joy of recovery. I was a part of the world around me through the group.

Since then I've come to believe that recovery is a gift granted by a loving God. I know that this disease never sleeps. Grace seeks us, but it will not try to control us. Addiction fills the spaces where grace might flow.

A loving God has given us the most powerful force in the universe—His grace—through the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Our experience of His grace grows as we help one another and carry the message of recovery.

I'm learning that recovery is a process and that I must keep both feet in it so I can walk in faith. This faith is empowered by grace and built on trust in a loving God, as I understand Him.

Just for today, fueled by the principle of humility, I must keep coming back and graciously accept this gift. It's great to be alive.

*RH, Connecticut*



## Home Group



## Group registrations: Is NA dying?

Once upon a time in a faraway area, Joe and Josephine Addict went to the ASC meeting. Both were group service representatives and had to attend. They both picked up literature for their groups and found out when and where the local dance would be held. Among the paperwork they were given by the ASC chairperson were NA group registration forms.

Joe Addict took the literature, dance flyers, H&I sign-up sheets, and the NA group registration form to his group's meeting. He dumped everything on the literature table. A little while later, a newcomer asked an older member for his phone number. He grabbed the nearest piece of paper—the NA group registration form—off the literature table, wrote his phone number on it, and gave it to the newcomer. The newcomer took it home, copied the oldtimer's phone number into his phone book, and threw the form away.

Josephine Addict took all of her group's information home, remem-

bering to take the literature and dance flyers to the next meeting. She put the NA group registration form in the trash, saying to herself, "What good does this do our group? It's just more busywork for me, the area, and the World Service Office. Besides, we're in the regional meeting directory."

Six months later, Joe and Josephine Addict decided to go on vacation together. They traveled all over, spending a few days at a seaside resort before moving on to a large city where Josephine's mom lived.

On their first full day in town, Joe looked at Josephine and said, "Hey, let's go to a meeting tonight."

Josephine said, "You're on! Let me call the phoneline." Josephine called directory assistance only to discover that the NA phoneline had been disconnected and there was no new number. "Now what do we do?" she asked.

"Call the World Service Office," said Joe.

The special worker who answered the phone at WSO first provided the phoneline number for the city Joe and Josephine were staying in.

"It's disconnected," Josephine said. "Can't you just look up a list of meetings and find out where they are?"

"Well," the special worker replied, "I'm real sorry, but we don't have any meeting information for that area."

"But you've got to!" exclaimed Josephine. "It's a huge city with hundreds of thousands of people. They've got to have NA meetings!"

"Well, we're sure they do, but no one has registered them, so we don't know where they are," the special worker sighed.



As she hung up, Josephine looked at Joe. He looked as stricken as she felt. Each was remembering a little piece of paper they hadn't filled out six months before. "What if a newcomer hit bottom tonight and wanted help?" Josephine whispered. "How would they find us?" She looked at Joe, as if for an answer. He didn't know either.



By request of the World Service Office Board of Directors, we present the preceding in order to illustrate the most important reason for groups to register with the World Service Office. Joe and Josephine are, of

course, fictional characters, but they represent real people experiencing a real problem that happens all the time.

The WSO board and staff want to be able to help addicts get to meetings. Please help with this. Wherever you go—meetings, dances, campouts, conventions—please announce the importance of group registrations. Sending your area or regional meeting directory to the WSO is not sufficient. In addition to the meeting's location, we need both the contact person and mailing address. Please use the form provided. Feel free to copy and distribute this form as widely as possible.

### NA GROUP REGISTRATION AND UPDATE FORM

Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Check if the meeting is open ☐ or closed ☐  
 Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/province: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Does this group offer? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wheelchair accessibility? ☐ yes ☐ no  
 ASL interpreter? ☐ yes ☐ no Sight-impaired services? ☐ yes ☐ no

The following information is necessary for any communication with your group.

Please list the information for the contact person or group postal box.

Check here [ ] if this is a postal box used only by your group.

Group name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ASC or contact name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/province: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO WSO, BOX 9999, VAN NUYS, CA 91409 USA



## Newsletters

### My home group is the best

**From *The Recoverer*, the Washington/Northern Idaho regional newsletter:** Before I share about why my home group is the best home group in NA, I'd like to share a little about why home groups are so important.

A home group is an essential tool in our recovery. By becoming involved with our home group, it gives us a sense of responsibility, trust, faith, commitment, and gratitude. Usually, the secretary keeps a list of regular members who consider that meeting to be their home group. In this situation, the home group members are the only ones allowed to vote on group business. This process allows each member of the fellowship to vote in one group only and is seen by some as encouragement to avoid

attempts to influence or manipulate group decisions by voting in several groups.

At a home group meeting, discussions are held and decisions are made with the help of an "ultimate authority," "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." We also discuss ways we can better fulfill our primary purpose. We become involved with our home group because we want to be here. Members show their concern in a loving way when we miss our home group's meetings, but we are never guilt-tripped for our absence.

We attend this meeting faithfully each and every week, getting involved and helping out. We must feel that our home group is the best home group in NA today, or we must find one we can feel that way about. We only have half a program without a home group. Find one yourself and be a part of it.

In my home group, my brothers and sisters care about each other, just for the mere fact that we are all the same. We carry a clear and focused message—one of unconditional love, understanding, faith, trust, friendship, honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. We've experienced true friendships regardless of where we've come from, who



we are, or what we've done. I feel the presence of a loving God at my home group. I support my home group both financially and spiritually. There is so much love in my home group, and that's why it's the best home group in NA today.

*Love and hugs, RT*

thought of having to share it with someone else! I was scared to death! All sorts of fears and thoughts began to spin through my head: Who would I choose? When? Where? After nourishing a relationship with my sponsor, do I take a chance that she'll hate me? What will she think? Will she think I'm selfish, self-centered, dishonest, or even perverse? What if I start to cry? What if I don't? The mind games seemed endless.

Well, needless to say, in the end it was the most wonderful, loving, bonding experience I've ever had! At times, when I would get into my embarrassment or shame, my sponsor would say, "I remember when I did the same things," or "It's okay, you don't have to carry this anymore." I was freed when I worked my Fifth Step. I was no longer alone with my secrets, and I realized I wasn't the "unique" individual I thought I was. It was soothing to find out that a lot of my actions and defects are common among addicts.

It was then I realized the magic of open sharing with my sponsor and others in the fellowship. As a result, something began to change within me. I finally understood what the oldtimers meant when they said, "Our secrets keep us sick." Since I was definitely tired of being sick, I finally began to do what they had been suggesting all this time—work my program.

*Janie*

## Fear of fifthing

**From *Inside Connection*, the American River, California, area newsletter:** When I first found recovery, it wasn't about working the steps. In fact, I really didn't have a clue what the steps meant and certainly didn't know how they would eventually change my life. At that point in my life all I really cared about, all I wanted, was to stop using. Little did I know that's what the steps are all about—changing our lives and our way of thinking so we don't ever have to use again.

I quickly got to a place where I realized, "Okay, I gotta work the steps."

I'd heard a lot of horror stories about the Fourth Step. Personally, the idea of me privately writing out my own moral inventory wasn't so scary. What was scary was the

## Forum



### News about Motion #39

The discussion of Motion #39 has been one of the liveliest the NA Fellowship has ever known. Those of you who have been following this column are well aware that the discussion has become downright divisive at times.

At the beginning of this year's WSC, the conference chairperson appointed a working group at the beginning of this year's WSC to review last year's recommendation. After some discussion, the group reached consensus on a new plan for dealing with the issue of God and gender in the English-language version of our steps and traditions. The plan was approved by an overwhelming majority of conference participants.

The new plan calls for the creation of a trustee ad hoc committee made up of two WSC Literature Committee members, two trustees, two RSRs, and one World Services Translation Committee member. The committee met in September to put together a paper explaining the issue, offering pros and cons from fellowship input already received at the WSO. This paper is part of a guide that groups, ASCs, and RSCs can use in running their own Motion #39 discussion forums. The package should be available from the WSO to anyone re-

questing it by the time this issue of *The NA Way* reaches your mailbox.

An open forum will be held at the 1995 WSC in two stages. First, WSC participants will discuss the issues related to Motion #39. Then they will discuss the process that will be used to register the fellowship's decision on the proposal to change NA's steps and traditions.

The RSRs will be expected to compile a tally of all the groups in their regions. Following the 1995 conference they will have about five months to mail those tallies in. Group ballots will be mailed to all ASCs in late 1995. The RSRs will be responsible to collect those ballots and bring them to WSC'96, where they will be counted. Motion #39 must be approved by two-thirds of those groups responding to pass.

This column will continue to run until April 1995. After that, any articles received concerning the issue of God and gender in NA literature will be run in the "Viewpoint" column as space permits.

### The real business of recovery

To suggest that newcomers will leave the rooms of NA and die because God is referred to as "He" or "Him" is laughable. It is "God" that they don't want to hear. Can we of



ourselves relieve the craving for drugs? Can you? No, but God can! Are new people really concerned about language? Hopefully they are willing to change their lives.

I wonder how many addicts lived or died while *It Works: How and Why* was being rewritten. Let's look at reality. What is the cost for such a change? A Sixth Edition of our Basic Text? A newly revised *It Works: How and Why*? Newly revised translations, when many haven't even been translated for the first time? Revised group readings? Revised IPs? A "newly, newly revised" Little White Booklet? Maybe we could have another group reading explaining the change.

I think all of this is possible, even likely. It will all create more confusion for the new people. For our fellowship to continue, we need newcomers to stay.

I don't know about your area, but ours has been struggling financially. From 1984 to 1994, our meetings grew from about 12 to 120 per week. More important than "He, She, Him," is that our phoneline needs shifts covered; H&I jail meetings are not being supported; only two to three are members doing PI work; drugs are being sold outside meetings where people come to get their slips signed; working prostitutes are trying to stay clean in NA; and we are not able to collect enough funds to meet our area expenses. Do you think that NA will just go on forever?

Do we need to be perfectly politically correct? What has happened to "Keep It Simple"? How about chronic

malcontent? Will there be more changes? Satisfaction in my recovery comes from sharing with the newcomer, not confusing the newcomer about how we should share. I love NA. We focus on the solution, not the problem. How about each group being autonomous? Group conscience could decide on what to read and how to talk. When that's over with, we can get to the real business of recovery!

*Anonymous/He-She?*

### **Change will save more lives**

I was recently asked to share my feelings on Motion #39. Although I tried my best not to form an opinion on this subject, the inevitable took place, and so here goes. I understand my personal Higher Power to be "They." Although I was agnostic at one time, my HP is a religious one. Those with knowledge of the Holy Trinity would understand. My HP is predominantly male, so naturally I can identify with God as Him.

But my Higher Power is not the issue here. The question is whether or not to change the wording of our steps and traditions in order not to give God a gender. I think that referring to God in our steps and traditions as "He" and "Him" implies that God is male. The God or Superior Being in most religions is a male figure. So, of course, when our steps and traditions were written, God was referred to as "He" and "Him." After all, isn't this what we were taught as children in our churches and temples and other places of worship? It is my opinion that when the steps and traditions were written, the authors

didn't have the issue of gender on their minds at all. It was tough enough trying to stay clean in a world that really didn't know what recovery was about yet, where twelve-step programs were unheard of. To me, God is God. I feel they referred to God as "He" and "Him" for simplicity's sake. "Keep It Simple," remember? Maybe a good idea would have been to explain in the preface or introduction of our Basic Text that although God is referred to as a "Him," we don't mean to imply that God is male. All members can arrive at their own understanding of God, whether that's He, She, They, or It!

I've heard many people say, "If it's not broke, don't fix it." What they're trying to say is: If the steps and traditions have worked for so many addicts just the way they are, why change them?

I understand what they're saying, but I have a different question: How many addicts have stayed out there or went back out because they couldn't accept our reference to God as a male figure? Did we prevent anyone from accepting the NA program because they could not relate to a male-oriented definition of God? I really hope not, but I don't know.

Another key question we need to ask ourselves: Can we save more lives by changing the language of our steps and traditions? My personal opinion: *yes!* More addicts will be able to relate to language that says simply "the God of our understanding," and they'll be more willing to work the steps.

One of the three indispensable principles we practice in NA is open-

mindedness. We learn to be open-minded to change. Being open-minded to change doesn't mean we have to change, but it does mean that we have to look at and explore all the possibilities, without prejudice. After careful consideration (and a little prayer) our Higher Power helps us

*"More important  
is that our  
phoneline needs  
shifts covered"*

make healthy decisions. We should realize that as time goes by, the world changes, people change, and our needs change. With this in mind, we should remain flexible and tolerant in our recovery. Remember, you can't graft new ideas onto a closed mind!

Our Basic Text suggests that our Higher Power should be loving, caring, forgiving, and, of course, greater than ourselves. We must all realize that the God of your understanding is your God, no one else's. No matter how I refer to my God, it should have no reflection on your God. In closing, I would like to say that, in my opinion, the language of our steps and traditions should be changed to refer to God as "God," not "He" or "Him." We don't lose anything in the rewording. In fact, we'll add God two more times, and we'll save more lives.

*RC, New York*



# Viewpoint



## NA's birth year: 1953 or 1947?

Was Narcotics Anonymous started in July 1953, as our White Booklet states? On 17 August 1953, when a Sun Valley, California group steering committee first met? On 5 October 1953, when that group held its first recovery meeting? Or was *Narcotics Anonymous* truly started on 16 February 1947 by Dr. VH Vogel at the US Public Health Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky?

For years we have celebrated the birth of Narcotics Anonymous in July, dating the founding of our fellowship back to 1953, because of what one of our early members wrote in our White Booklet: "With several other addicts and some members of AA who had great faith in us and the program, we

formed, in July of 1953, what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous."

This, however, conflicts with records we have in our own archives. The group referred to by the above-noted author held its first steering committee meeting at the home of Frank and Doris C in the Sun Valley neighborhood of Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley on 17 August 1953. It was composed of a few drug addicts associated with Betty T's HFD (Habit-Forming Drugs) Group, a network of Lexington alumni in the Los Angeles area who maintained their recovery through participation in the AA program, and a few of their "pure alcoholic" AA supporters. They had come to the conclusion that they needed more than just AA meetings to maintain their own recovery and to make recovery accessible to other drug addicts. They moved to form their own fellowship, which they first called "San Fernando Valley Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous" or AANA. At the fifth business meeting, the steering committee voted to adopt for itself the statement of purpose used by the original Lexington program and published in its membership newsletter, *The Key*. The group changed its name to Narcotics Anonymous at its sixth committee meeting on 14 September 1953. After one more steering committee

meeting to pin down last minute details, the Sun Valley NA group held its first recovery meeting on 5 October 1953. Everything we think of as Narcotics Anonymous that exists today can be traced back to that meeting.

That meeting, however, was just one of three recorded outgrowths of the in-house twelve-step meetings held for narcotics ward patients at the US Public Health Service hospital in Lexington, Kentucky. The Lexington group, which called itself Addicts Anonymous, was organized by a PHS staff physician, VH Vogel. According to an account published in the 7 August 1954 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* and reprinted in the November 1993 issue of our own *NA Way Magazine*, the Lexington group held its first meeting on 16 February 1947. It had members all across the United States, linked by mail through the group's newsletter, *The Key*, which in 1954 had five hundred names on its mailing list. Lexington alumni were responsible not only for the Los Angeles HFD Group and, eventually, the Sun Valley NA Group, but for a Narcotics Anonymous group active in New York City in the late 1940s and early Fifties and a "behind the walls" group at the federal penitentiary in Lorton, Virginia.

Neither the Lorton nor the New York groups survived, however; not even the original Addicts Anonymous program in Lexington persisted beyond the Fifties. Only the Sun Valley group continued meeting, albeit haltingly, through the Sixties and Seven-

ties, spreading first to Northern California and then to a few other major US population centers, until by 1980 more than two hundred known Narcotics Anonymous groups could trace their origins back to that October 1953 recovery meeting—which, in turn, considered itself a kind of chapter of the Lexington Addicts Anonymous program, started six and a half years earlier.

This author therefore suggests that we update our White Booklet and our anniversary calendar to reflect NA's true birthdate, for it is clear that Narcotics Anonymous as we know it today can trace its origins directly to a twelve-step meeting for drug addicts seeking recovery held on 16 February 1947 in a narcotics ward in Lexington, Kentucky. True, NA would not exist today had our California pioneers not stuck it out through the Fifties and Sixties, but those pioneers traced their own origins to Dr VH Vogel of the US Public Health Service and to Lexington.

LM, California

1947  
1953



## Bogged with dogma

You know what I hate about this time of year? At every meeting I go to someone is talking about "this time of year." They talk as if they used more during this time of year than any other. I doubt they did, but I know for sure I didn't. It didn't matter to me what time of year it was when I was using, so why should what time of year it is make any difference in staying clean?

Maybe I'm just feeling a little offended. People keep telling me that this is a spiritual, not religious, program and that I won't be bogged down with religious dogma. Yet every year, for the past nine, between the third Thursday of November and the first day of January, people are talking all about religious happenings throughout the area.

I'm not Christian. I don't want to hear about Christ or Christmas in an NA meeting! It's an outside issue as far as I can remember. In fact, as far as I'm concerned, it's a *commercial* outside issue.

I don't remember when I decided that I would believe in God of our understanding rather than a God of

mine or yours, but whenever it was, I was assured that you wouldn't force yours on me if I didn't force mine on you. Yet every year at this time, I feel overwhelmed by all of you shoving a deity that I do not believe in down my throat.

I hate this time of the year because it's the only time when I have to put up with people in a spiritual meeting of Narcotics Anonymous talking about completely religious circumstances and totally outside issues. I'm expected to keep my mouth shut and take it because, well, I don't know!

I would like people to respect me during this time of year as much as I respect others during the rest of the year. And it's not just me. If I feel this way, I'm sure others do, too, because I've never yet been unique around here. Even if there's only one person who feels as I do, he or she could be a newcomer. What if the newcomer gets offended enough to walk out before he or she hears the message of recovery hidden behind the religious teachings? I love this program, and I want to keep coming back. Don't you? Don't you want the newcomer, the most important person at our meetings, to feel comfortable?

*BB, North Carolina*

## From our readers



### When all else fails

Left to my own devices, I would be dead or locked up somewhere against my will. Through the fellowship, I have a shot at a decent life without the chemical stimulus that literally ruled my life.

I've often heard it said that when all else fails, follow directions. Turning it over to my Higher Power, doing the next right thing, taking responsibility for my actions today—all this I can do because you all have. And you, after all, are living proof that recovery in NA works.

Before I got here, I was not a happy camper. I had two hopes:

1. I would die peacefully in my sleep.
2. I would be sent to an institution that treated inmates in a civil manner.

Hopeless, I used your hope until I could realize some of my own. I had two years clean on 19 July and I am so grateful to all of you. I'd never have made it alone. Believe me, I had tried many ways to do just that before I came into NA and was willing to listen and learn. I haven't become perfect and I'm not cured of my disease, but I am so much better in so many ways. When I look back at how it really was, it's like looking at some-

one else. I can look in the mirror today and not be full of hate, anger, and resentment. It's taken a lot of work to get to where I am today, and it takes a lot of work to move on.

Service has been a big part of my recovery, from cleaning up to chairing meetings, to sponsoring addicts in jails and institutions, serving when asked, sharing at meetings, and sometimes just being a clean example of what life can be.

We can only keep what we have by giving it away, and I don't want to lose what I have today. Thanks NA, thanks to the God of my understanding, and thanks to all you people who are a part of the solution. Thanks for saving my life.

*JS, Indiana*

### Thank you, VB

I'm Martin and I am an addict. I want to say thank you to VB from Idaho for his article in the June issue.

My father was a member of this fellowship with twenty-four-plus years clean. He passed away on 5 May 1994. I want to say thank you to the power greater than myself for letting my father and I share in each other's recovery.

My dad's name was Al and I really loved him.

*MM, California*



# Comin'up

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## CANADA

**Ontario:** 31 Mar. - 2 Apr. 1995; 8th Ontario Regional Convention; Niagara Falls; hotel (905) 356-8444; info. ORCNA-8, PO Box 23006, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada L2E 7J4

## INDIA

**Maharashtra:** 27-29 Jan. 1995; 3rd Bombay Area Convention; Khandala; fax 0091-492-26-87; info. BACNA-3, PO Box 16489, Bombay, India 400 016

## NEW ZEALAND

**North Island:** 3-5 Feb. 1995; 4th Regional Convention; Oratia; rsvns. (09) 4452665; fax (09) 3022334; Regional Convention, PO Box 6826 Wesley Street, Oratia, Auckland, New Zealand

## SWITZERLAND

**Vaud:** 24-26 Mar. 1995; Switzerland Area Convention; Convention Committee, CP 429, 1000 Lausanne 17, Switzerland

## UNITED STATES

**California:** 31 Dec. 1994; Southern California Regional New Year's Celebration; Culver City; info. (818) 359-0084

2) 10-12 Mar. 1995; 1st Western States Literature Convention; Huntington Beach; info. (818) 359-0084

3) 14-16 Apr. 1995; 4th So. Cal. Spring Gathering; hosted by gay & lesbian members; Manhattan Beach; rsvns. (800) 333-3333; info. (310) 438-3902; Spring Gathering, PO Box 20247, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

**Connecticut:** 6-8 Jan. 1995; 10th Connecticut Regional Convention; info. CTRCNA-10, PO Box 2121, Middletown, CT 06457

**Florida:** 10-12 Mar. 1995; 6th Florida Spring Service Break; Miami Beach; rsvns. (800) 327-6363; info. FSSBNA-6, 5122 NW 79 Ave. #108, Miami, FL 33166

**Georgia:** 13-15 Jan. 1995; 7th Peace in Recovery; Augusta; rsvns. (706) 855-8100; info. (706) 860-8784 or (706) 650-9111; Peace in Recovery, PO Box 15863, Augusta, GA 30909

**Illinois:** 10-12 Feb. 1995; 4th Rock River Area Convention; South Beloit; rsvns. (815) 389-3481; info. (815) 397-0911; RRCNA-4, PO Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

**Kansas:** 7-9 Apr. 1995; 12th Mid-America Regional Convention; rsvns. (913) 827-8856; info. (913) 823-3854; MARCNA-12, PO Box 242, Salina, KS 67402-0242

**Kentucky:** 20-22 Jan. 1995; 5th Louisville Area Convention; rsvns. (502) 451-6463; info. LACNA-5, PO Box 37311, Louisville, KY 40233

2) 14-16 Apr. 1995; 9th Kentucky Regional Convention; rsvns. (502) 443-8000; info. KRCNA-9, PO Box 1584, Paducah, KY 42002-1584

**Maine:** 10-12 Mar. 1995; 3rd Multi-regional Learning Event; Alfred; info. (603) 432-0168; NEERSC-3, PO Box 1752, Portland, ME 04104

**Massachusetts:** 17-19 Feb. 1995; 3rd Boston Area Convention; rsvns. (800) 228-9290; info. BACNA 3, 398 Columbus Ave. Suite # 2, Boston, MA 02116

2) 3-5 Mar. 1995; 6th New England Regional Convention; Framington; info. (617) 648-3139; NERC-6, PO Box 393, Arlington, MA 02174-0004

**Michigan:** 13-16 April 1995; 3rd Detroit Area Convention; Detroit; rsvns. (800) 228-3000; hotel (313) 899-0023; info. (313) 361-4214; speaker tapes requested (5 yrs. min. clean time) send to: DACNA-3 Program Committee, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

2) 29 June - 2 July, 1995; 11th Michigan Regional Convention; Flint; rsvns. (800) 333-3333 or (810) 239-1234; info. (810) 544-2110; speaker tapes requested, send to: MRCNA-11, PO Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

**Minnesota:** 31 Dec. 1994; 7th Annual New Year's Eve Party; Albert Lea; info. (507) 373-2936 or (507) 373-4563

**Missouri:** 30 Dec. - 1 Jan. 1995; 1st United Kansas City Area Convention; Kansas City; rsvns. (800) 444-2326; info. (816) 822-7421

**Nebraska:** 25-26 Feb. 1995; 8th Fremont Area Campout; Lynwood; info. (402) 727-7351; FACNA-8, 99 South Irving, Fremont, NE 68025-5739

**New Jersey:** 30 Dec. - 1 Jan. 1995; Bergen County Area Convention; rsvns. (800) 832-6663; info. (201) 458-1805; BASCNA, PO Box 118, Lodi, NJ 07644

2) 3-5 Mar. 1995; 5th Cape Atlantic Area Convention; rsvns. (800) 695-4685; info. (609) 391-2144; CAACNA-5, PO Box 7386, Atlantic City, NJ 08404

3) 31 Mar. - 2 Apr. 1995; 1st Capital Area Convention; East Windsor; rsvns. (609) 392-8508; info. Convention Committee, PO Box 741, Trenton, NJ 08604

**North Carolina:** 13-15 Jan. 1995; Western North Carolina Convention; Asheville; rsvns. (800) HOLIDAY; info. (704) 298-9562

**Ohio:** 6-8 Jan. 1995; 6th Central Ohio Area Convention; Columbus; info. (614) 252-1700; rsvns. (614) 846-0300

2) 4-6 Aug. 1995; 1st Tri-Area Convention; Cleveland; speaker tapes requested (3 yrs. min. clean for workshops, 5 yrs. min. clean for main mtgs.); info. (216) 663-4025; Tri-Area Convention, PO Box 33372, North Royalton, OH 44133

**Oklahoma:** 20-22 Jan. 1995; 5th Norman Winter Convention; info. (405) 447-4650; NWC-5, PO Box 1455, Norman, OK 73070

**Oregon:** 25 Feb. 1995; Pacific Cascade Regional H&I Learning Day; Eugene; info. Regional H&I Learning Day, Box 262, Eugene, OR 97440

2) 19-21 May 1995; 3rd Pacific Cascade Regional Convention; Bend; info. PCRC-3, PO Box 40844, Eugene, OR 97404

3) 29 Sept. - 1 Oct. 1995; 8th Pacific Northwest Convention; Speaker tapes requested (3 yrs. min. for workshops, 5 yrs. min. clean for main meetings); Please send before 1 Mar. 1995 to: PNWCNA-18, PO Box 80146, Portland, OR 97280

**Pennsylvania:** 14-16 April 1995; Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention; rsvns. (800) 822-4200; info. GPRC, PO Box 14170, Philadelphia, PA 19138

**Puerto Rico:** 21-23 July 1995; 6th Unidos Podemos; Condado Plaza Hotel; San Juan; info. (809) 763-5919

**South Carolina:** 13-15 Feb. 1995; 6th Central Carolina Area Convention; Hilton Head Island; info. (800) 922-6587 or (803) 254-6262

**Tennessee:** 11-12 Feb. 1995; Upper Cumberland Area 3rd Anniversary; Cookeville; info. (615) 498-2885; Anniversary, Cumberland Area, PO Box 164, Rickman, TN 38580

**Texas:** 14-16 April 1995; 10th Lone Star Regional Convention; Fort Worth; rsvns. (817) 870-2100; info. (214) 245-8972 or (800) 747-8972; LSRCNA-10, 1510 Randolph, Ste. 205, Carrollton, TX 75006

**Utah:** 10-12 Mar. 1995 Northern Utah Area Convention; info. NUACNA, PO Box 242, Ogden, UT 84402



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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.

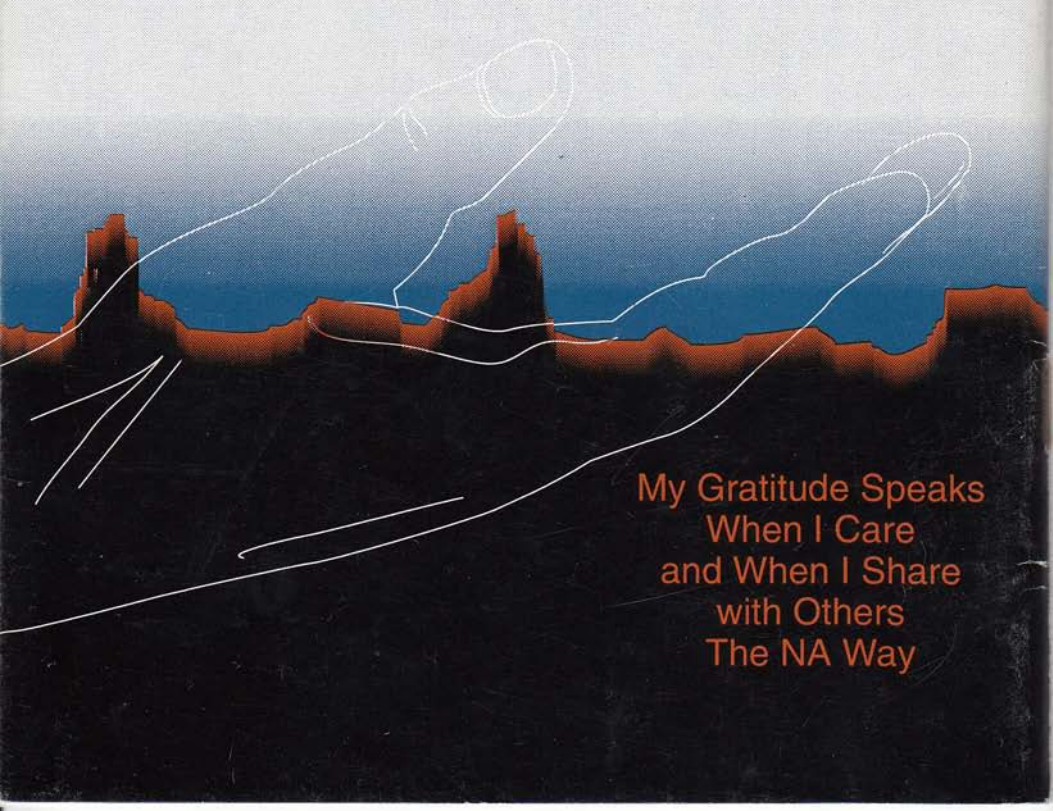

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## What is Narcotics Anonymous?

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.



My Gratitude Speaks  
When I Care  
and When I Share  
with Others  
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