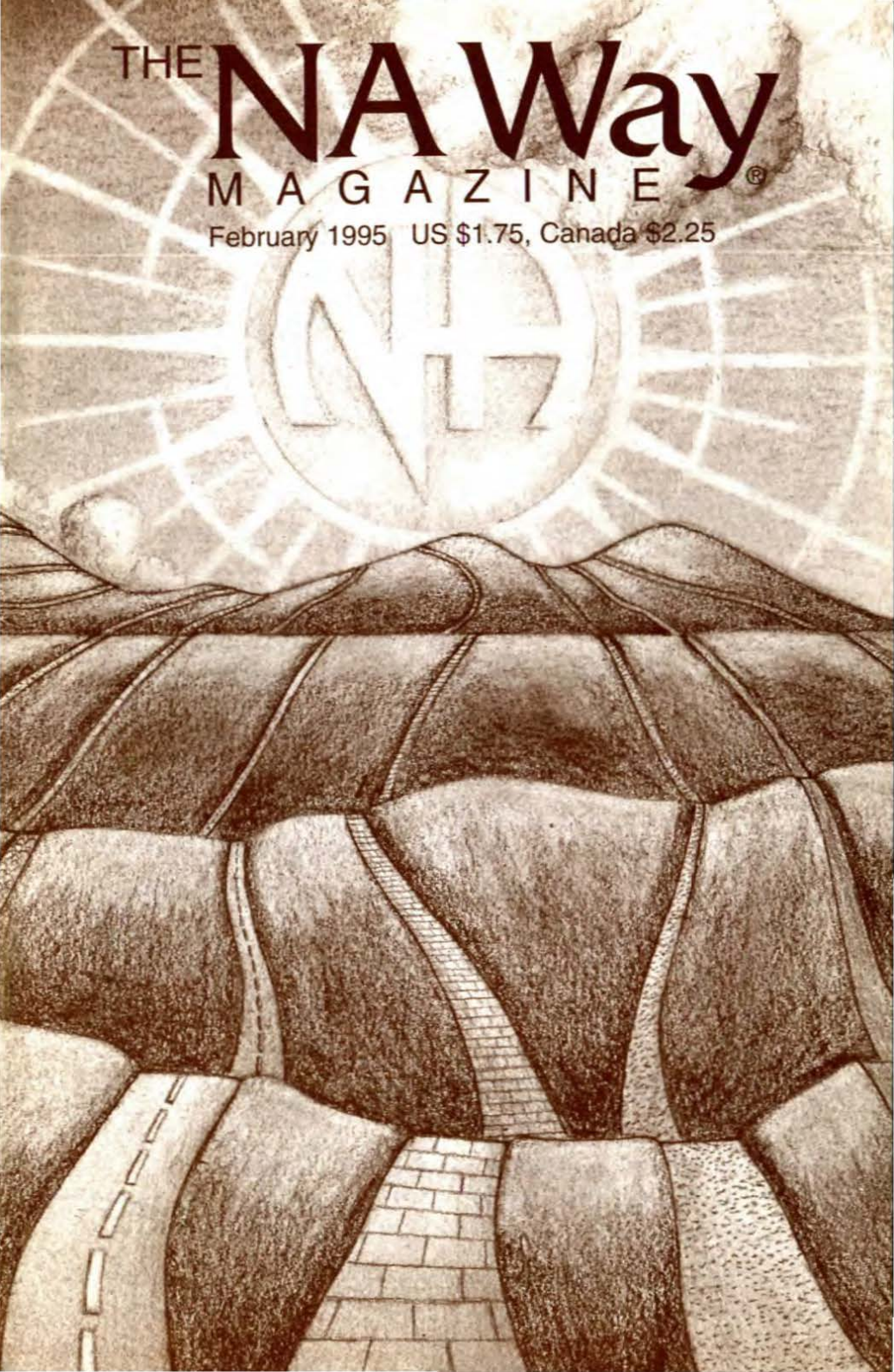


THE **NA Way** MAGAZINE®

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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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NA Way[®]

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From the editor



In NA, we're very careful to emphasize the spiritual, not religious, nature of our program. Our Twelfth Step speaks of a spiritual awakening. We often describe someone we admire as "spiritual." But what is spirituality? More specifically, what is spirituality to an NA member?

Well, it depends on who you ask, I guess. Some will describe a spiritual awakening as a cosmic transformation from their previous selves. Others will tell you that the principles of the NA program and an effort to live according to them is spiritual. Some will tell you that a spiritual program must include reliance on something called God. Others will say just the opposite.

One thing our literature makes very clear: We can't afford to ignore or resent spirituality. Every NA member is called upon to find a way of understanding "spiritual" that he or she can live with.

As we begin—or continue—this search for an understanding, it often helps to listen to others who are in recovery. In the following pages, some of our members have shared their understanding of spirituality. The views expressed are diverse and reflect at least a little segment of our fellowship. We could never hope to include every understanding of spirituality in these pages. We'd need an entire library. Still, we hope we've covered a wide variety. Even more, we hope that you'll write us and tell us of your own spiritual experiences.

Help!

Those of us who work on *The NA Way* often talk about the magazine—not just in terms of day-to-day details such as page layout, editorial considerations, and circulation management, either. We talk about how we can make the magazine better, more relevant to all our members, more open to differing viewpoints, more reflective of an international fellowship. We've come up with some ideas, and we've put them into practice. And most of us think the magazine is pretty good!

But our circulation figures tell a different story. The fact is they're smaller than they were a few years ago. We're concerned. We're either way off base in thinking the magazine is meeting the needs of our members, or we're not successfully telling our fellowship that it has a magazine. We send a group drive to all ASCs about this time of year, but in doing that, we find ourselves facing the same problem we always face when we try to communicate with our members by mail: We can only communicate with people we're already communicating with because we don't have addresses for the others.

You can help. Please announce the magazine at meetings you attend. If you enjoy it, tell others. If we have failed to please, tell us. We'll listen to any suggestion, and we'll try to use any reasonable ones. We appreciate your support.

CT, Associate Editor

Dear God,
You've helped me so much over the years. You allowed me to live in my own free will until I hit bottom. You brought me in desperation to Narcotics Anonymous. You gave me open-mindedness, willingness, and honesty, and you helped me to surrender without reservation.

All this, before I even knew that you existed! But you were inside me all along, and you guided me along the way. You used others as your messengers to give me hope and inspiration.

You were loving and compassionate and I began to see the truth. You led me to have faith. I began to trust and take action, and I made a decision to follow you.

You helped me develop courage and you turned that courage into integrity within me. You molded me anew so that you could use me to inspire others with hope. As you strengthened my willingness, you let me learn about humility.

In the light that you shone on me, I recognized the love that I felt for all my brothers and sisters. You gave me feelings arising from the source of my true nature—your love. You guided me so I could be that love. You gave me discipline so that I could live in your love.

You saw that I became alive with all these new attributes, so you gave me perseverance to continue. You gave me more questions than answers, so I sought you more often and on a deeper level. You created in me the truth of spiritual awareness. You gently and lovingly awakened my spirit. You relieved me of my fears. You brought me into a relationship with you that still sustains me on my spiritual journey.

You gave me others to serve, with the awareness that we are all one. You taught me that being of service to others is how I show my love and gratitude.

You've given me valuable lessons. You've given me a choice. Thank you.

HK, Florida



If it isn't practical . . .

I feel fortunate that I didn't have a problem with God when I first got clean. I didn't have a practical, working relationship with God, but I didn't have any trouble believing that a God existed.

When I came to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting, I had been using for twenty years. I had difficulty thinking clearly. I had trouble talking. I was afraid to ask for help. I had no experience with prayer or meditation, and no idea of how to build a relationship with the God of my vague understanding. An abstract concept of God did not seem very practical for me at the time.

I knew I was a mess—miserable and desperate. I could see how I was powerless over my addiction and unable to manage my life. I knew I needed help, and the Second Step called on me to identify where that help was going to come from. I needed something practical, however, to use as a Higher Power—something concrete that could offer me the help I so desperately needed. Narcotics Anonymous was the obvious answer.

I got just exactly the help that this confused drug addict needed. To help me remember what the NA program was about, everything I heard was repeated over and over: the readings at the beginning of meetings, the step essays at step discussion meetings, the clichés, the suggestions. I heard what I needed to hear until it soaked into my confused mind.

People reached out to me and offered their help long before I was willing to ask for it. They gave me phone numbers and offered to sponsor me. Meetings provided a safe haven where no one was using and the focus was on recovery. The literature provided a wealth of experience that I could tap into, and I read it over and over until it made some sense. The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous provided me with a path to follow, and members shared their experience applying the principles contained in the steps.

When I found myself in trouble, I did not think of prayer, but rather of calling another member. NA was a capable Higher Power—loving, caring, and certainly greater than me.

The Third Step explanation talks about action and how the "proof of this step is shown in the way we live." For me, this step is about demonstrating my willingness to turn my will and my life over to this new way of life. I demonstrate that I have made my decision when I go to meetings, stay clean, do service work, apply the principles of the program, and get involved in sponsorship. Going to work on time, doing a decent day's work for a day's pay, treating people with respect, and paying my bills are

also demonstrations that I have made that decision. I am convinced that it is what I do, not what I think or say, that is the key to working the Third Step.

Today I feel I have a good relationship with the God of my understanding, but I have not abandoned Narcotics Anonymous as a Higher Power. The two seem quite compatible as Higher Powers in my life. I continue to rely on the practical suggestions I found in NA to help me through the difficulties and crises my life presents. And I still believe that the God of my understanding offered me Narcotics Anonymous as the ultimate kindness—and gave me another shot at life. I am grateful for both.

Anonymous



A manifesto

Ah, Semantics

I've heard it said that it's hard to be too dumb for this program, but real easy to be too smart. Or, put another way: Spirituality is not a concept attainable by the intellect.

I can easily relate to that since my penchant for philosophy has often been an obstacle to my recovery. When I first came to NA I was turned off by the "G-word" and had a whole arsenal of arguments to tell you why. When my home group closed meetings with the Lord's Prayer, I remained silent or only sounded out words that I agreed with ("Hallowed," for instance). Fortunately, they accepted me as I was and simply shared the message of recovery.

Since that time, one of my spiritual awakenings has been the gradual opening of my heart to the Universe of my own misunderstanding. Experience in working and then living the Twelve Steps has made this possible, giving me the freedom to become who I really am (and will be). Since I am still a philosopher at heart, skepticism remains the constant, so I take what works for me and leave the rest. But if I were to write a manifesto about my surren-

der that might possibly speak to others as prone to off-thinking as I am, it would look something like this . . .

Pride Is The Star That Yawns

What about the addicts who don't believe in "heavenly fathers," but accept existence as its own reality and likewise accept our own responsibility for the world we live in? We like to think of ourselves as humanists because we cherish our humanity and glory in its potential. "Don't be afraid of skin," we whisper to each other. "Glory, glory as we are—the joy and grief of being alive and aware." We include Christ and the Buddha, Krishna, and Mohammed, Teresa of Avila, Meryl Streep, and Morgaine Le Fey.

All too often, however, our ideals as humanists came in second, losing to our illusions. In active addiction, we forgot or at least gave up on our liberty. The drive to use always seemed to get in the way of our search for truth. We came around because we had to, with bruised egos. Like the others before us, we stayed because we wanted to.



Still, we secretly asked, "Will the Twelve Steps work for me?" We didn't want to limit the possibilities of "Power" and the greater than/less than variable. We just seemed to return time and time again to the idea that personality is a human trait and "God" is a way, not a being. We thought, "How can I turn my will and life over to God as I understand Him when God isn't a person?" This didn't mean that we did not believe in the power of restoration, but we felt this process was natural, not supernatural. Eventually, an awakening voiced its depth:

Bread Is To Be Eaten

We reluctantly accepted the Twelve Steps by looking through the dualistically inclined, Judeo-Christian, male-parent-flavored language to find the spiritual principles we needed in our lives. "They just work," we were told. "Apply them, and when you look back you will catch a glimpse of understanding." We saw that the Twelve Steps do get results because it does not matter whether you think the power you need is a natural well-

spring of your own creativity or a drenching rain poured from the timeless clay pitcher of the man upstairs. We know that to argue the point is useless, for myth knows no boundaries. These are questions, the answers to which we will never be able to prove.

Never Alone

One form of surrender comes in giving up the need to have the most airtight philosophy and to know of the existential answers, or to win the game of Alpha-Omega analysis. Letting go of our precious convictions (as we had to let go of the delusion that we were in control of our lives), being open to healing from each other, and being committed to share this way in fellowship are the beginning steps of spirituality. Or, as some of us would say, the beginning of learning to be (w)holy human.

*Anonymous
Reprinted from the Together
News, the Heart of Illinois area
newsletter.*

A personal recovery dictionary

I have written my personal definitions of some words that I, as an atheist, found particularly disturbing and ambiguous in early recovery. After eight years, I have come to understand these words in a unique way. When I hear the words used at meetings now, I do an internal translation.

Faith

The common denominator behind all religious experience. I am not referring to a belief in something despite a lack of evidence. That is one definition of faith, but not the only one necessary for recovery in NA.

I mean the inner experience of faith that all the great spiritual masters have known. Faith is total openness to reality, an acceptance of the universe as it is, not as I would have it. It is a peaceful experiencing of being.

Faith is complemented by those parts of my life where I do have power and need to exercise it; namely, my actions. Everything else is essentially beyond my control.

God

A metaphor people use to enable them to accept reality, a word that helps them live with faith. Phrases like "Let go and let God," and the first part of the Serenity Prayer, illustrate this concept.

Some people imagine a supernatural and conscious being who manages the reality beyond their control. I do not believe there is any conscious being in control of reality. Therefore, to have the experience of faith, I need the help of nontheistic ideas.

Being

Also known as Nature, Reality, or the Universe. This is not separate from us. It is neither loving nor caring. It just is, and we are "being" human. Being gives birth to all natural processes, of which I am but a small fraction. I seek to bring my awareness to being here and now.

My feeling self

This refers to the me that is below my neck. I live much of my life from the neck up—in ego, obsession, and projection. To relax and focus my awareness on my inner experience from the neck down is soothing, and gets me into the moment.

Time

An ever-elusive concept. "Let go and let time" is a good slogan. Just leaving things I can't change up to the dynamic processes of time is helpful.

God's will

The course of action that sustains/promotes my recovery. (Could God not want that?). What is healthy is determined in the moment, using "prayer" and "meditation"—words I've defined below—listening at meetings, and reading any available information about recovery.

Prayer

Any honest attempt to determine God's will; that is, what is healthy. It can take the form of writing, talking, or thinking quietly to myself. It is a verbalization of "where I'm at" to clarify what options for action are available to me.

Meditation

When used in combination with prayer, meditation is an honest listening to my "below the neck" self for signals in the form of feelings about what the healthiest course of action is. Remember, morals come from within. When considering behavior options during prayer and meditation, certain choices feel right for me. I intuitively know what is healthy for any particular situation. When it does not come easily, I either give the decision some time or just act and have faith.

When I meditate independently of prayer, it is to develop faith. I sit quietly and open my senses to reality, without fighting any of the thoughts, feelings, sounds, or sensations that arise. I let them happen. As the Basic Text says, I allow them to "arise and die a natural death." I become

totally centered in the here and now, not desiring anything more. This experience carries over into my everyday life.

Spiritual

An adjective used to describe a way of life that is marked by faith and carrying out God's will.

Some people use it as a noun to refer to some dimension of reality that is somehow different or separate from the natural dimension. I do not accept this distinction.

To more experienced members: If a newcomer has beliefs about spirituality different than yours, attempting to change those beliefs will hurt more than it helps. Encouraging newer members to find beliefs that feel right to them will demonstrate that we live up to our claim to be a "spiritual, not religious" program. Let's be tolerant of all avenues of faith. We can get beyond the self-centeredness of statements like, "My way is the only way," and move toward encouragement like, "If it works for you, then it is right for you."

I have personally done a lot of work on this, being an atheist in a fellowship made up predominantly of theists. I hope this is helpful to others who may be having the same problem.

Anonymous

The teacher shall appear

I believe that my Higher Power places people in my life precisely when I need them most. As I become willing to learn each lesson, the most adept teacher appears. Realizing this has been a wonderful and faith-building experience for me. Most of all, it has helped me ask for guidance when I see a mountain in front of me. I'm not as quick to discount the suggestions of those who have been in recovery longer than I. I'm not as tempted to try to make it alone. I have become teachable.

I got clean in prison. I had been arrested for several felonies, and my future looked bleak. It had not yet occurred to me that being in prison was related to my addiction. On my second full day inside, I received a visitor who would change my life forever.

His name was B and he was in recovery. He regularly came to the prison on Sundays. He would ask the guards if there were any men he could talk to. That Sunday, he was sent to talk to me.

I didn't know the man and I wanted to disbelieve everything he had to say. My closed mind was not opened by his also being a Catholic priest. I agreed to at least listen to what he had to say (my first attempt to be open-minded).

Soon he was telling me things about myself that I was sure no other human being could possibly know. He talked about feelings I had, even though I had denied myself the privilege of feeling them. He asked me questions—to which only I knew the answer—in a way that suggested he had once asked himself the same questions and knew my answers.

How could this total stranger know so much about me?

Soon, his apparent knowledge of what was ailing me won my confidence. I confided in him and he became my first sponsor. He talked to me about faith, not religion. He also talked to me about the basics that work for anyone trying to abstain from drugs: pray, call your sponsor, and—most of all—don't pick up!

I was incarcerated for six months, and then released to a treatment center. As my release approached, B told me that his role in God's plan had come to an end. He told me the treatment center would teach me about the Twelve Steps of NA, and that I would need someone recovering on the outside to guide me further.

"How will I find an NA sponsor from here?" I asked him. He said he would attend some open NA meetings and listen to those who spoke. He would follow his heart, and he would know the right person when he



met him. This concept seemed crazy, but I trusted him.

A few days later, I received a visit from my new sponsor. When we saw each other, we were both stunned! Years ago, I had a using buddy named T. One night after a big party at my house, he disappeared. And now, three years later, he sat across from me with three years clean. B had been at the meeting where T celebrated his third anniversary clean, and had asked him to visit a newcomer at the prison. T had agreed and here he was.

He was easy to trust and be honest with because I had known him before. It was more difficult to be dishonest with him because in many ways, he already knew me. He helped me through my First Step and to this day, though I have moved across the country, his influence is still a big part of my recovery. I could not have picked a more adept teacher.

DH, Virginia

Seeking a spiritual awakening

Ever since I attended my first regional service committee meeting, I have been somewhat confused by what goes on there. I guess I assumed that those in service positions somehow would be more spiritual than others, and that they would truly have the best interests of the NA Fellowship at heart. Unfortunately, time has proven to me that this isn't necessarily so.

Part of my problem was that I got caught up in the hope and excitement of being newly reborn into recovery. At long last, I had found the release from active addiction that had eluded me for decades. I have always been idealistic, and that idealism continued into my early recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. As a result, I tended to place on a pedestal those with longer clean time, expecting them to be better and more spiritual than I.

Watching recovering addicts argue and verbally attack one another at my first regional service meeting shocked me into a new awareness. It also reminded me that there is no place for my idealistic expectations of those who have gone before me in

Narcotics Anonymous. No matter how long I may stay clean, I might never really recover from the totality of my disease. That left me with the need to discover what I could do to continue my progress in recovery.

After a long series of conversations with my sponsor and others whose recovery and spirituality I admired, I stumbled upon my answer in the Twelfth Step: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Herein lies the key to my ongoing recovery, as well as the understanding that ended my confusion.

Simply put, if I don't continue to work the steps to the best of my ability—all of them—I will probably never achieve the spiritual awakening that Step Twelve promises. For me, never coming to that spiritual awakening would, in the end, be worse than continued using. I didn't get clean to stay miserable. It was hope and the promise of a new and better life that brought me to Narcotics Anonymous in the first place.

I hope and pray that all will understand I intend no judgment or condemnation toward anyone by what I have written. The confusion and turmoil in my early recovery came from within. I have had to sit back and examine my own motives for being involved in NA service. In fact, I still struggle today with my positions in NA service. It still causes me pain to watch trusted servants fight over issues that we face in service. At times, it seems literally impossible to distinguish the principles from the person-

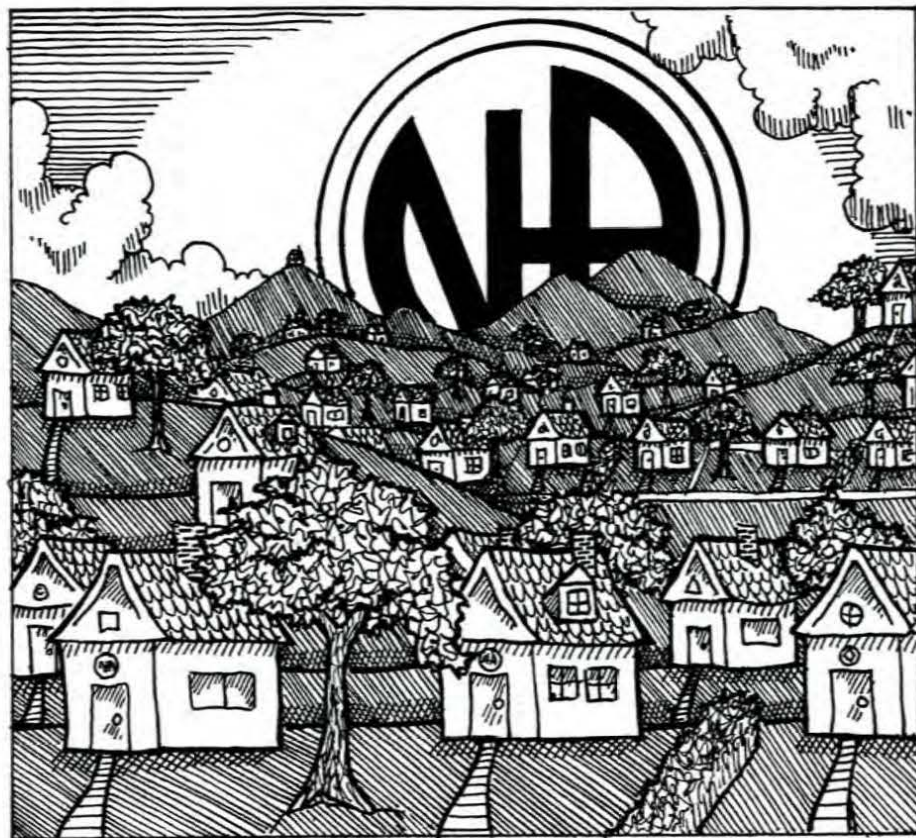
alities. I have often wondered to myself whether most addicts are driven by a desire to serve or to control.

I have sat in subcommittee and area service committee meetings and watched us attack both individuals and other groups because they had different ideas or opinions than ours, or they didn't share our thoughts on a particular issue or concern. And through all of this I also have seen newly reborn addicts falter and drift away in confusion because they are taken aback, appalled by the confusion, turmoil, and lack of spirituality that they witness. Newcomers come

to NA expecting a better way of life, and too often we show them the cancer of our self-centeredness. It has a disastrous effect on NA unity and the spiritual welfare of our community.

If anything, I hope that this will be taken as an appeal to all of us in NA service. May we strive to adhere to the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of the Narcotics Anonymous program. If we individually strive for the promised spiritual awakening of Step Twelve, we have the potential to grow as a community beyond our wildest imaginings.

LM, France



Faith works

It seems that a lot of members in my area are going back out the doors of NA. We are all concerned when we don't see a particular addict at meetings, and it hurts when we hear they are using once again. Some of the fortunate ones who make it back tell of some great tragedy that occurred in their lives, supposedly the cause of their using. But misfortune does not necessitate relapse, nothing does.

The common relapse themes of the addicts I have talked to are:

- 1) failure to go to meetings, and
- 2) loss of faith in a Higher Power.

Recently, I have endured the loss of my father, with whom I had developed a loving relationship; seen my mother-in-law suffer from a lingering and seemingly undiagnosable disease; and lost my job due to layoffs here in the Northeast. None of these things was worth using over.

My Higher Power will not give me everything I pray for, or maybe He will give it to me in His own way. I have learned not to pray for specific things, but only for the knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry that out. This He always grants. I tell the men I sponsor that I carry my

God in my belly, and He lets me know when I'm doing something I'm not supposed to be doing.

Through the tough times, I am comforted by my God, supported by my home group, and loved by my family—both blood and NA. All it takes sometimes for this program to work is faith, hope, and willingness. If your Higher Power doesn't work, try someone else's. If you have no hope, take some of mine. If you have no willingness, remember the sickness and despair of active addiction. Above all, remember that you are loved even when you feel you don't deserve it, and you are needed by all of us, especially those of us who are living life on life's terms.

I thank God that my father got to see me with nine-and-a-half years clean, and that I am here for my mother, my mother-in-law, and the rest of my family.

I would like to close with a quote I heard somewhere: "I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it without knowing what's going to happen next." But knowing that you *will* make it.

Home Group





Newsletters

Note: Featured here is an article that was printed in The Bottom Line in both Spanish and English. We like to print articles in languages other than English whenever possible, because we believe this reflects and helps us serve our worldwide fellowship.

On meditation

From The Bottom Line, the Gold Coast, Florida area newsletter: Step Eleven says, "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 can confirm that, for me, the practice of meditation has been and still is a great tool. I have been able to use it not only to improve my conscious contact with God, but also in my daily life to relax my mind and get my batteries recharged.

Meditation is a relaxing activity, not a religion or a philosophy. To meditate effectively, you need four things:

1. A tranquil and quiet place.
2. Something to concentrate on (a word, a breath, a sound).
3. A passive attitude.
4. A comfortable position.

There are many different ways to meditate. Narcotics Anonymous recommends no way in particular. Any form is acceptable if it works for you.

One popular method is to concentrate on your breathing, since breath is a natural and essential aspect of life. It's simple. Every time you breathe in, inhale slowly and deeply. When you exhale, breathe out until your lungs are totally empty, concentrating all the time on the sensations you feel while breathing in and out. Listen closely to the sound that sustains your life (here you will find God), until you forget everything that's going on around you.

When the mind is relaxed and concentrated, you can focus on your concept of God or any spiritual principle you choose. This is only one of the many methods that could be used. Any way could be equally efficient. The benefits you receive will depend largely on the consistency of your practice.

You don't have to wait to get to your Eleventh Step to meditate formally. Try it as soon as possible; the results will be fabulous!

Anonymous

Nota: Presentado aquí es un artículo que fué publicado en "The Bottom Line" en español y en inglés. Nos da gusto publicar artículos en diferentes lenguas cuando posible porque creémos que esto refleja y nos ayuda servir a nuestra confraternidad mundial.

La meditación

Nuestro paso numero once nos dice, "Buscamos a través de la oración y la meditación mejorar nuestro contacto consciente con Dios, tal como lo concebimos, pidiéndole solamente conocer su voluntad para con nosotros y la fortaleza para cumplirla."

Les puedo confirmar que para mí, la practica de la meditación ha sido y sigue siendo una gran herramienta la cual he podido usar no solamente para acercarme conscientemente a mi Dios, si no también en mi vida diaria para relajar efectivamente mi mente, mi sistema nervioso, y mi cuerpo físico y al mismo tiempo para cargar mis baterías.

La meditación es una actividad relajante, no es una religión ni una filosofía. Para meditar eficazmente hacen falta cuatro cosas:

1. Un lugar tranquilo y silencioso.
2. Un objeto en el cual concentrarnos (puede ser una palabra o un sonido para repetir).
3. Una actitud pasiva.
4. Una posición física confortable.

Existen muchas formas diferentes de meditar. Narcóticos Anónimos no recomienda ninguna forma particular, cualquier forma que se practique es aceptada, pero practícala.

Un método popular es el de la concentración en la respiración ya que la respiración es un aspecto natural y esencial de la vida. El método es simple. Cada vez que respire haslo profundo y lentamente y espira completamente hasta vaciar los pulmones concentrándote en las sensaciones que sientes al respirar. Escucha atentamente el sonido que sostiene la vida al respirar y exhalar (aquí está Dios) hasta que te olvidas de todo lo que está pasando a tu alrededor.

Cuando la mente está relajada y concentrada entonces la puedes enfocar en tu concepto de Dios o en cualquier principio espiritual. Pero este es solo uno de muchos métodos existentes. Cualquier método que utilizemos puede ser igualmente eficiente. El beneficio recibido dependerá de la constancia de la práctica.

No hay que esperar hasta trabajar el paso once formalmente para meditar. ¡Prueben la meditación lo mas pronto posible, los resultados serán fabulosos!

Reflections from the past

From *The Cleaning Ragg*, the Tri-County, Texas area newsletter: I'm sitting here in the belly of the beast, staring into a four-by-twelve-inch window in my cell door. This small window is the only hope for sanity for some of the people who live in these cells. I seldom see any movement.

Occasionally, I see an inmate in the window. I can see him in the distance. I see him stare at me. But it's only a reflection from my past.

I am a drug addict! Often, as I say that, tears begin to form in my eyes, even now. Lately, I've begun to see things so much differently and I would like to share a little of that. I would also like to say, "Hello, family," to all the recovering addicts who are reading this. I look forward to sharing my story with you.

I am thirty-five years old and have spent fourteen years of my life in prison. I am sentenced to a total of 105 years. My clean date is 23 May 1989.

Myself, I usually preferred heroin, yet I knew it didn't matter much; I used whatever would change the way I felt! A .357 in the front of my pants, a .38 in the back, a knife in my boot, and a short fuse burning fast, filled with anger—that was me.

My drug use began when I was nine, crime at an even younger age. If someone had asked me back then what I thought the "Twelve Steps" were, I probably would have said it

was twelve ways to get out of my life. The only traditions I knew were revenge and retaliation. Those were fine old traditions—at least in my part of town.

As I look back at the reflection in the window, the guy I used to be is laughing like crazy, but I'm crying. I keep going to my little window looking for a friend. I know the friend is there, but my past keeps watching me, looking for a chance to take control again. I must strive for sanity, and so I hold on.

Listen, if any of you feel like relapsing, just hang on. Whoever your God is, please keep the faith. Don't give up! The monster of addiction is waiting for us. Many times lately I have been driven to my knees with the overwhelming conviction that I have nowhere else to go but NA. I have discovered where my friends are, and I realize the need for NA to be part of my life.

I just looked at the reflection in the window again. The addict is still there, but I'm standing in front of him. It's quiet in this place. I feel like asking him, "What is it? What do you see that is so damn funny?" I started to walk away, but thought I heard a voice saying, "One lost soul, Frank. A lost battle."

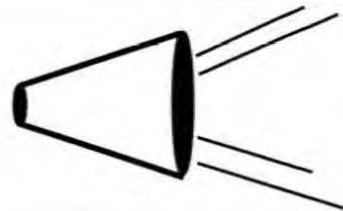
Don't worry, 'cause before I walked away this time, I laughed back. I'm not scared. Where he sees failure, I see triumph. The victory is already mine.

The lights will go out in five minutes, so I'd like to close this with something special I've learned: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

God bless you all in your recovery.

Frank B

Forum



An update on the steps and traditions language issue

Quite a bit has happened in relation to the "Motion 39" discussion since WSC'94. For the past few months, *The NA Way* has printed a report on a plan developed at WSC'94 for dealing with this issue. The plan, which carried as Motion 88 at WSC'94, called for discussion of this issue during the coming year and outlined a process by which the fellowship's conscience could be registered.

The editor has learned that what we have been referring to as Motion #39 actually became Motion #88 at WSC'94. What was first introduced as Motion 39 at WSC'93 was actually altered quite a bit by the working group assigned to discuss it during that conference. The original motion referred only to the male gender assigned to God in NA's steps and traditions. However, the working group at WSC'93 felt that "the issues expressed in Motion 39 are bigger than the language used in Motion 39" and that those issues should therefore be discussed for an extended period of time. The work group recommended that the following two questions be committed to the fellowship.

1. Does the language of the steps and traditions truly reflect the principles of the program?
2. If not, what language does the fellowship feel would better reflect those principles?

The Motion 88 ad hoc group has developed an issues paper and workshop guidelines that the fellowship can use to hold discussion forums. That package was mailed to *Newsline* recipients and is available to anyone requesting it.

The ad hoc group originally believed that after a year of fellowshipwide discussion, the fellowship would be ready to decide if a change to the steps and traditions was desired, and how that process would occur. However, because of the depth of this issue, the ad hoc group now feels that the discussion should be extended for another year.

The NA Way Editorial Board is discussing whether or not this column should be extended for another year. We will keep you posted.

A good idea, but is it practical?

Can anything new be said about this issue? I'm not sure, but I haven't seen my own perspective yet in this column, so here it is.

In a nutshell, I support the notion of removing gender bias, wherever possible, from references to God in the steps and traditions. I think that would be more open, and more inclusive of all people who come to the steps for a spiritual awakening, but I'm not sure it's practical. I think an absolute criterion for making any such changes ought to be that any changes we make do not diminish the steps or traditions in any way. We're close to meeting that criterion in the effort we've seen in Motion 39, but we don't quite get there.

Before I try to back up that assertion, I'd like to make one more. The problem we're seeking to address by recommending these changes is not an NA problem, or even an AA problem that we inherited, but a problem inherent in the English language. We simply don't have a pronoun that is both personal and gender-neutral. "He" and "she" imply "personhood" of some kind, and are therefore personal and intimate in a way that the word "it" simply can't convey.

Virtually everyone struggles with this as Western culture shifts toward placing greater value on the equality of the sexes. Writers use devices like "he/she" (which almost no one likes, but some live with), or "they" even when the referent is singular, or passive voice, or pluralizing wherever possible to make "they" or "them" work grammatically. The language isn't cooperating very well with this cultural shift, and we're caught in this just like everyone else. There's no easy fix.

If we did remove the gender bias from the steps and traditions, what

do we do with the many references to God as "Him" that we find elsewhere in NA literature? Even if we can get it done in the steps and traditions themselves, can we maintain it consistently throughout our literature? Do we even want to? Maybe the answer to all of these questions is: "Yes, we could and should do it." I'm simply suggesting that we think the issue through to a logical conclusion before we start down the road. Maybe we're biting off more than we care to chew.

But now to the specific issues:

The phrase, "a God of our understanding," is, I believe, weaker than "God as we understood God." The former erodes the sense of singularity of God. Our Second Tradition says, "... there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God..." As far as I'm concerned, that strong statement of singularity synergizes beautifully with the "God as we understood Him" aspect of the Third and Eleventh Steps. This synergy is critical to the strength of NA's very fabric; while we are unified under the power and guidance of a single loving God, we all conceive of that God differently, and we have full permission to develop our own conception and therefore our own personal relationship.

"The God of our understanding" could imply multiple Gods—you have yours and I have mine—which is somewhat at odds with Tradition Two. If we do make changes, I'd therefore recommend this modification in our approach: "God as we understood God" rather than "the God of our understanding."

So if we simply replace the word "God" for the word "Him" wherever it appears in the steps, we get all the way through them in a way that I'd support. The Eleventh Step gets a bit redundant, but not so much that it presents a bigger problem than does the gender bias of "Him" and "His." No real problem so far.

The show-stopper is Tradition Two. Let's first look at its current form:

"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."

The phrase, "A loving God as He may express Himself," has several important qualities. First, it speaks of God as singular, a point already discussed above. Second, it contains an active voice statement of God taking action. God expresses himself. Third, it is personal. God has "personhood" by virtue of the pronoun "Himself," which would be lost or at least diminished with the pronoun "itself."

The phrasing "a loving God as may be expressed" woefully waters down the essence of Tradition Two. Now you don't have the strong, active-voice statement that "God may express Himself," you instead have the weak, passive-voice "God may be expressed." That, in my view, fails the test stated above: that there must be no diminishment if we are to justify these changes. We lose more by shifting from active to passive expression on God's part than we gain by removing gender bias.

So let's try something else. How about "God as God may express Godself." Way too awkward. Maybe "God as God may express itself." Much better, but it shifts from personal to impersonal, a shift that also diminishes more than it fixes in removing gender bias.

Way back in 1982 or so, a group of trusted servants in my home region sat down and tried to work up a proposal of this nature to submit to the conference. We got through the steps just fine, but Tradition Two stumped us. We felt then much as I feel now. While the goal is a worthy one, it must not be pursued at the expense of the steps or traditions. In the end, we agreed that we'd have to live with the limitations of the English language, just like everyone else, and leave the steps and traditions alone. If someone can modify Tradition Two in a way that is personal, that leaves God's action stated in the active voice, and that is not clumsy and awkward, then we may have a stronger basis for the changes proposed. Until then, I would argue for defeating Motion 39.

RH, New Mexico

Viewpoint



The rings of service

It is sometimes difficult to describe the structure of service in our fellowship outside the group. We look at different charts in our service manuals or pictures of upside down pyramids and sometimes ask ourselves questions like, "Is the group at the top or the bottom?" and, "Who's in charge?"

The confusion makes me think that our belief in the authority of a loving God as expressed in the conscience of the group conflicts with our process for providing service at the area, regional, and world levels of service. While self-will can be a problem for any addict in any service commitment, our problem may not be the actual *structure* of our organization, but rather our *perception* of that structure.

Instead of looking for a top or a bottom for our service structure, it makes better sense to me to focus on the center of service in NA: the group. We could view all of our services outside the group as rings of service that hold us together. From this perspective, the question we ask isn't, "Who's in charge?" but, "How do we keep our focus on serving the group's needs?" No matter where we stand in the rings of service, we look toward the center.

Recovery from the disease of addiction in Narcotics Anonymous happens in only one place. It is the miracle of recovery that we share during an NA meeting, from opening prayer to closing prayer. No amount of service, personal writing, or even a close relationship with our sponsor can replace the need for attending meetings regularly to share in the miracle. The NA group exists solely for this purpose, and is the only service body that can follow all Twelve Traditions. The ultimate authority in a group is very strong and simple: a loving God is expressed in the values, morals, and beliefs of the collective group. The group is guided by the collective awareness of, application of, and surrender to spiritual principles in a very simple way. Our literature states that "NA, as such"

refers to the group. All else serves only to support "NA, as such."

As groups in an area join together to form committees that will support the group in carrying the message of recovery, we step outside the direct influence of the powerful conscience that guided us in our home group. Each committee's primary purpose is based on supporting the group in carrying the message, in either a direct or indirect way. Even H&I presentations focus on getting addicts to show up at meetings. When H&I presentations in long-term facilities are recovery-based, they are groups in institutional form.

Area service should not be looked at as above or below the group, but as a collective ring outside the group. We can look at an area service meeting as an event: the coming together of the groups and the committees. The groups reach out to direct the committees in serving the groups' needs, and the committees reach in toward the center to keep the committees' purpose focused on the collective conscience of the groups they serve. The area ring of service is also responsible to reach out farther to the next ring of service.

The purpose of the service ring within a region or multiregional zone is basically the same, only larger and farther from the center of NA and its primary purpose. Regardless of the structure, size, or service provided, a region functions to provide services for its groups. It takes great effort to stay in touch with the collective conscience of the groups at the regional level. A region is responsible to hundreds of groups within it, usually

through the collective conscience of the areas. For regional committees and trusted servants in this outer ring to keep in touch with the heartbeat of NA at the center, they must have a strong commitment to service and be willing to go to great lengths to

*"We sometimes
ask ourselves,
'Who's in charge?'"*

serve the needs of the groups. In the same way, both the groups and areas must be willing to reach out to direct and fill the needs within this outer ring of service.

World service is the universal ring that bonds our fellowship together. We are a fellowship of groups in areas and regions from around the world. Unlike regions—representing groups with many similar needs and interests—the universal ring of world service brings together regions that have very different needs and beliefs, usually also with differences in economics, language, and culture. The needs and beliefs from metropolitan US regions are very different than those of a region including all groups in a country in South America or Europe. In addition to having a deep understanding of the values, morals, and beliefs of the groups they represent, RSRs must be very open-minded to under-

stand the very different needs of groups from other regions.

World service committees must reach far to understand the needs for service around the world. As some older regions have experienced, when a region has grown solid in its structure and support for its groups, its dependence on world service lessens. It seems that we remain a worldwide fellowship because our need for unity is equal to or greater than our need for region-specific service. Our differences can only help us grow as long as we remember that the true bond holding us together is the universal understanding of, application of, and surrender to the spiritual principles of the Twelve Traditions at the group level.

Our service structure may look a little more understandable if we view it as larger and larger "rings of service" that surround and unite the group. There is no higher or lower level of service. Once we step into service outside our home group, the roles of the GSR and RSR are the same. Whether we serve at area service or on the Board of Trustees, our purpose is the same. From the inner ring of service at the area level, to the universal ring of service at the world level, our purpose is to support the group in carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers so that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction.

MR, New Jersey

Editorial replies

In response to "Open for Recovery" August 1994: I have just received my copy of *The NA Way Magazine*, and I feel compelled to write and express my viewpoint, I hope in a caring manner. What I wish to share in print is in answer to the question, "What's happening to our meetings?" that was posed in the "Newsletter" section in an article titled, "Open for Recovery."

At one time, I too asked myself that very same question as far as "open discussion" meetings go. But I know that people allowed me to be just where I was, in whatever stage of recovery I was in. Today I have a little more tolerance toward both newcomers and old-timers. I have to extend that same understanding to everyone in our rooms.

Contrary to what the author said in "Open for Recovery," our meetings are a form of group therapy—minus counselors, preachers, and judges. Our Basic Text talks about "the *therapeutic* [italics added] value of one addict helping another." This is what happens in our meetings.

On page 54 of the Basic Text it says, "...when we hurt, we go to a meeting and find relief." Nobody is perfect. We all experience pain eventually. I don't like to hear an addict whining either, but some members need to be encouraged to share, whine, dump, cry, or whatever. Page 56 of the Basic Text says, "Sharing with fellow addicts is a basic tool in our program. This help can only come from another addict. It is this help that says, 'I have had something like that happen to me and I did this....'"

Yes, discussion meetings can focus on a specific topic to help further our Fifth Tradition. However, if anyone wants to share what he or she is honestly experiencing, even suffering, at that moment, the topic becomes second in importance to that addict's right to share. Our groups must remember that "groups aren't addicted and don't recover," as it says in the essay on Tradition Five in our Basic Text.

It goes on, "All our groups can do is plant the seed for recovery and bring addicts together so that the magic of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing, and service can do their work." The essay suggests that we try to keep our meetings recovery-oriented, but regardless of what someone shares, we plant a seed that grows into a belief that "an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life."

Thanks for letting me share.

OB, Louisiana

In response to "On Trusted Servants and Accountability" June 1994: When I read, "On Trusted Servants and Accountability," I had to respond. You see, I got my NA Way right after I got home from our regional service weekend, where my ASR report included voicing the frustration I feel every month at ASC. The GSRs listen to my long, detailed reports, take no notes, ask no questions, then come back the following month without having remembered to ask their groups to vote on any of the motions or issues from RSC.

*"Ever show up
at your group's
business meeting
and find that
you are the
only one there?"*

I offer them copies of the regional minutes, make sure regional motions and world service information appears in our area's newsletter, and offer to show up at business meetings. I ask, "Are there any requests, questions, or discussion?" Almost never. And I wasn't the only ASR with the problem—lots of heads nodded while I was addressing the floor.

Ever watch the faces of group members when the secretary or GSR announces, "There will be a business meeting tonight"? Ever show up at

your home group's business meeting to vote on the *Conference Agenda Report* and find that you are the only one there? Ever hear the people with the most clean time in your home group say that the guy with three months clean should be GSR because "I have a life and don't have time for the job"? Does your area hold trusted servant workshops to help the new GSRs learn about service, only to have no one show up except the people who are facilitating the workshop?

The bottom line is that sponsorship and involvement with a home group are two vital aspects of our recovery. We stress getting sponsors and home groups to newcomers, but do we tell them what it means to be involved with a home group? Do we let them know that their opinion is valued, and that they set the direction for the World Service Conference, the World Service Board, and the World Service Office? Do we tell them that part of membership in Narcotics Anonymous is being part of the worldwide fellowship by participating in the conscience of their home group? Do their sponsors get involved in any kind of service, and do they drag their sponsees along with them on service commitments like my sponsor did?

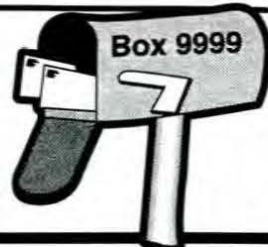
If you have some clean time, like the writer of the letter I'm responding to, do you suggest to the people you sponsor that they get interested in what's going on? If we don't teach them, how will they learn?

We talk about being responsible, productive members of society. So, be responsible to NA. Don't complain

about lack of accountability; get in there and insist on it by being involved with your home group. Ask your GSR what's really happening; don't fuss because the business meeting takes too long. Find a subcommittee you feel you can fit into and show up. Get interested in your group, your area, your region, and the world, then stay interested. Find out about new literature; read what we already have. Nobody can read everything, but it is my responsibility as a member of NA to be as informed as possible about what is going on in my area, my region, and in world service. It is my responsibility to teach those who come in after me about their responsibilities to the fellowship. I do that job to the best of my ability. If each member of NA does his or her job at the group level, the trusted servants will have someone to be accountable to.

MT, Florida

From our readers



Fear into love

I recently read an article that truly touched me. Talk about hearing my story!

I was diagnosed with AIDS last year in February. Like the writer of the story, I had been tested before, after being clean for eight months. The first test came back negative. A year later, I came down with pneumocystis carinii pneumonia and was hospitalized for fourteen days.

It's funny how deep in denial I was because I knew—on some level—that I had the virus before any doctor ever told me. I had too many AIDS-related symptoms not to know, but I didn't want to believe. I thought that since I was getting my life together in recovery, this really couldn't happen. But my gut feelings knew better.

I had just over eighteen months clean when that bomb was dropped on me. Tonight I celebrated my three-year birthday, and I owe it all to God and the fellowship. I am so grateful that I am in recovery and have a strong support group. I have days when all I do is cry, but they are a lot fewer than before. Just like I surrendered and admitted I was powerless over my addiction, I did the same with AIDS. I am not a victim. I am a strong black woman learning how to live life on life's terms.

I am so grateful for my God, my friends, the fellowship, a warm and loving man and family. I am afraid, but when I channel that fear into the love I have for myself and others, the love is all that remains. This all became possible through NA.

JJ, California

Surmountable obstacles

Hi. My name is Terese, and I'm an addict. About five years ago, I was in a bad car accident that resulted in me having a brain injury. I was in a coma for ten days and wasn't expected to live. When I woke up I had to learn how to walk, talk, and live all over again. I couldn't comprehend much and my short-term memory was pretty bad. I had to move from my hometown to a place where I could learn how to live on my own again.

I lived in a group home for the brain-injured for eight months. After that, I moved into a supervised apartment, then into an unsupervised apartment—all this time still in active addiction. I got a job at Walmart, then I quit to go to Cosmetology College. I finished school, but just two months before my exam I was picked up for public intoxication. I knew it was time to get help.

I put myself into treatment. I became friends with some addicts and they took me to my first NA meeting. I listened to people talk and I thought

they were reading my mind. After the meeting, total strangers came up to me and gave me a hug and told me to keep coming back. I thought this was way cool.

Today I am a member of NA. I go to lots of meetings. I can understand discussions of recovery at meetings and can give a good message. You bet I'll keep coming back. My accident was a blessing. I know there's hope for recovery, even after a bad car accident. You just can't give up, because life is too short.

TB, Iowa

Beyond myself lies faith

Hi. I'm Kim, and I'm an addict. I just got a year clean for the third time. I'm twenty-six and I've been in and out of the program since I was eighteen. I know today that self-obsession is definitely the core of my disease.

I've always gone to meetings and worked on the steps with a sponsor, but in my mind I always had reservations. I have been thinking mostly of myself for the last eight years. I

chose to use again and again. I wasn't capable of being honest with myself. I let drugs take the place of my Higher Power, because when I'm in denial I think getting high will give me the peace I desire.

Today, I know that to stay clean I have to be NA-centered. I have to go to any lengths to stay clean. I have to share because I can still lie to myself, but my fellow addicts see the truth. I have to listen to everyone because I don't know it all. My best thinking gets me loaded.

I need this program like I need food and water. My "yets" out there are prison and death. My future in recovery is more self-love, more self-respect, and not as much self-obsession. I know I will never be perfect, but today I strive to be a loving person. I have complete faith in NA today and, through NA, I can grow to have the faith I need in my Higher Power.

Thank you for my life. You give me hope for inner peace.

KB, Arizona

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CALLED YOUR
SPONSOR
TODAY**

Comin'up

Calendar						
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CANADA

Ontario: 31 Mar. - 2 Apr.; 8th Ontario Regional Conv.; Niagara Falls; rsvns (905) 356-8444; ORCNA, Box 23006, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada L2E 7J4

Toronto: June 30 - July 2; 5th Canadian Conv.; International Plaza and Conference Center; info (416) 783-4393; CCNA, Lawrence Plaza, Postal Outlet, N Ontario, Canada M6A 3B7

NEW ZEALAND

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

SWITZERLAND

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

UNITED STATES

California: 10-12 Mar.; 1st Western States Literature Conv.; Huntington Beach; info (818) 359-0084;

2) 14-16 Apr.; 4th Southern California Spring Gathering; Manhattan Beach; rsvns (800) 333-3333; info (310) 438-3902; Spring Gathering, Box 20247, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Connecticut: 28-30 Apr.; United Shoreline Area Conv.; Mystic; rsvns (203) 536-4281; info (203) 437-7229; USANA, Box 1807, Groton, CT 06340

Delaware: 10-12 Mar.; 1st Small Wonder Area Conv.; Wilmington; rsvns (800) 777-9456; info (302) 656-5903; SWACNA, Box 0808, Wilmington, DE 19899

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

Hawaii: 24-26 Mar.; 11th Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; info (808) 942-3708; Gathering, Box 75271, Honolulu, HI 96836

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

Indiana: 3-5 Mar.; 2nd Indianapolis Area Conv.; rsvns (317) 244-6861; info (317) 875-5459; ISNAC, Box 47496, Indianapolis, IN 46247

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

Kentucky: 14-16 Apr.; 9th Kentuckiana Regional Conv.; rsvns (502) 443-8000; info KRCNA, Box 1584, Paducah, KY 42002

Louisiana: 26-30 May; 13th Louisiana Conv.; rsvns (504) 734-9794; info (504) 733-2213; LRCNA, Box 1314, Hammond, LA 70404

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

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

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

Michigan: 13-16 Apr.; 3rd Detroit Area Conv.; Detroit; rsvns (800) 228-3000; info (313) 361-4214; speaker tapes (5 yrs. min. clean) to: Program Committee, Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

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

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

Nevada: 23-26 Feb.; 9th Southern Nevada Conv.; rsvns (800) 634-6713; info (702) 656-7909; SNCNA, Box 4542 E Tropicana # 101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

2) 14-16 July; 4th California-Arizona-Nevada Area Conv.; Laughlin; rsvns (800) 227-3849; info (602) 754-4260; speaker tapes (5 yrs. min. clean) before 1 Apr. to: CANAC, Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439

New Jersey: 3-5 Mar.; 5th Cape Atlantic Area Conv.; rsvns (800) 695-4685; info (609) 391-2144; CAACNA, Box 7386, Atlantic City, NJ 08404

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

New York: 10-12 Mar.; 1st Rochester Area Conv.; rsvns (716) 475-1910 or (800) 333-3333; info (716) 482-8977; RACNA, Box 485, Rochester, NY 14603

2) 26-28 May; 10th Greater New York Regional Conv.; rsvns (800) 233-1234; info (212) 242-8140; GNYRC, Box 285, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

North Carolina: 3-5 Mar.; 8th Capital Area Conv.; Raleigh; rsvns (919) 872-2323; info (919) 755-5391; NCCAFRNA, Box 50196, Raleigh, NC 27650

Ohio: 4-6 Aug.; 1st Tri-Area Conv.; Cleveland; info (216) 663-4025; speaker tapes (workshops 3 yrs. min., main mtgs. 5 yrs. min.) to: Tri-Area Convention, Box 33372, North Royalton, OH 44133

Oregon: 25 Feb.; Pacific Cascade Regional H&I Learning Day; Eugene; info Regional Learning Day, c/o EASC, Box 262, Eugene, OR 97440

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

3) 29 Sep. - 1 Oct.; 8th Pacific Northwest Conv.; speaker tapes (workshops 3 yrs. min., main mtgs. 5 yrs. min.) before 1 Mar. to: PNWCNA, Box 80146, Portland, OR 97280

Pennsylvania: 3-5 Feb.; 11th Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conv.; Harrisburg; rsvns (717) 939-7841; info (717) 944-5905; MARLCNA, Box 4616, Harrisburg, PA 17111

2) 14-16 Apr.; Greater Philadelphia Regional Conv.; rsvns (800) 822-4200; info GPRC, Box 14170, Philadelphia, PA 19138

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

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

2) 27-29 May; 3rd Greenville-Anderson-Pickins Area Conv.; Clemson; rsvns (803) 654-7501; info (803) 882-0200; GAP, Box 6031, Anderson, SC 29623

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

Texas: 17-19 Feb.; Tejas Blue Bonnet Regional World Learning Weekend; Austin; rsvns (800) 766-7060 or (512) 867-7372; info (512) 832-9914

2) 24-26 Feb.; 11th Texarkana Area Conv.; rsvns (903) 793-6565; info (501) 772-5014; TACNA, Box 6321, Texarkana, TX 75501

3) 14-16 Apr.; 10th Lone Star Regional Conv.; Fort Worth; rsvns (817) 870-2100; info (214) 245-8972 or (800) 747-8972; LSRCA, 1510 Randolph # 205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Utah: 10-12 Mar. Northern Utah Area Conv.; info NUACNA, 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.

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

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
The NA Way