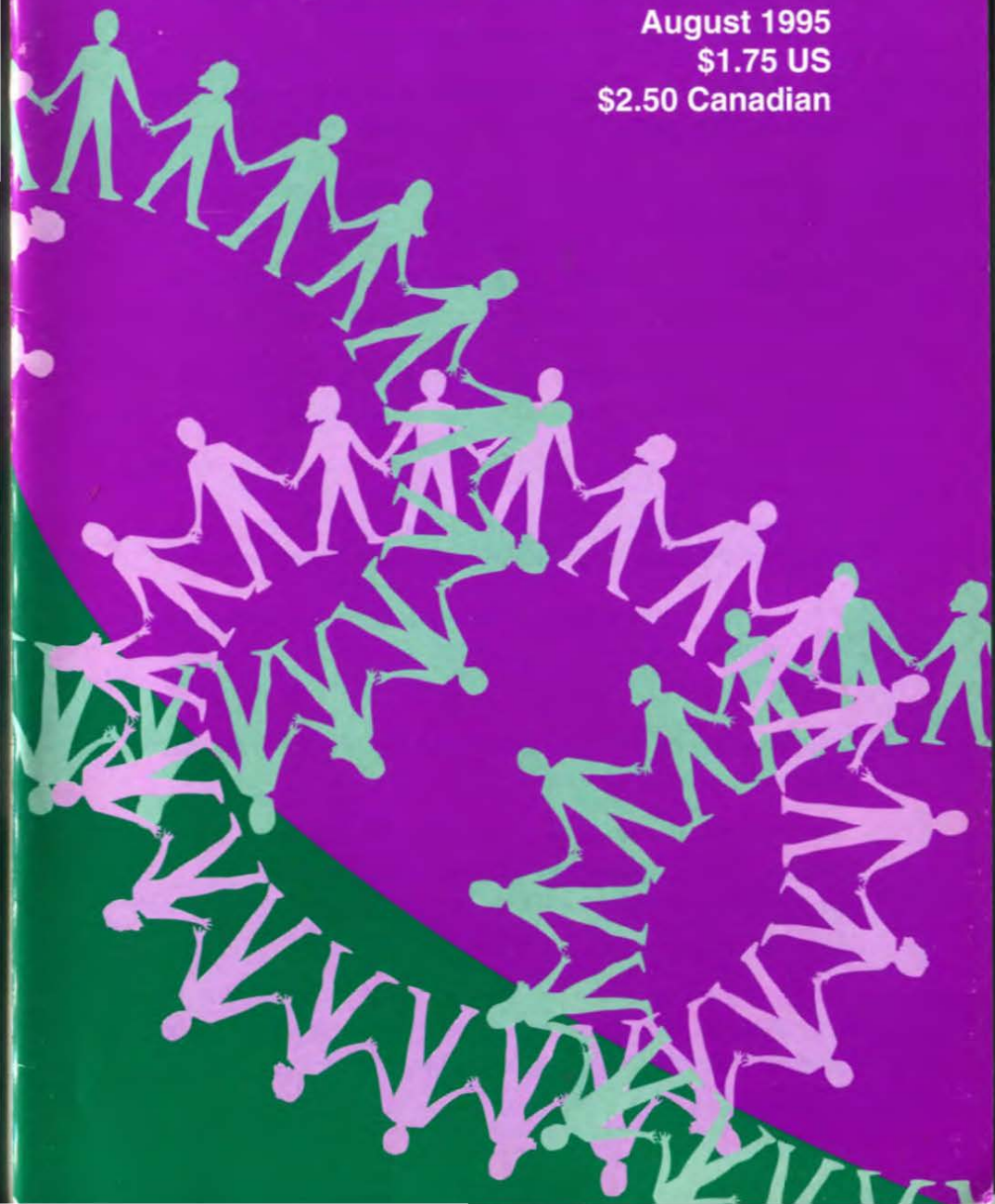


# THE NA Way. MAGAZINE

August 1995

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## The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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## THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

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Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999  
(818) 773-9999

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# From the editor

## What's up with the "Readers' Survey?"

We're getting responses—about eighty-five at this writing. Thank you very much to those who've sent them in. Your response to the survey in many ways helps those of us who put together the magazine.

I will begin compiling the results within the next two weeks and, I hope, will be able to publish them in either the September or October issue of *The NA Way*.

The results will be published in an informal format for two reasons. One, we don't want to give the impression that this survey was done according to any type of scientific process. Two, we believe an informal write-up fits best with the style of our magazine: friendly and, we hope, accessible.

Again, thanks very much to all who participated. We're looking forward to sharing the results with you.

## A reminder about "Comin' Up"

*The NA Way* is happy to run announcements for your upcoming NA events.

We must have a minimum of two-and-a-half months notice to get your event announcement into the monthly issue of the magazine that corresponds with your event. In

other words, if your event is in July, we need to know about it by 15 May in order to run it in the July issue of *The NA Way*.

If you want your event to run in more than one issue, we need even more notice. We do our absolute best to run the information as far in advance as possible. Your best bet is to let us know about your event as soon as you've set the dates for it, booked a location, and established contact phone numbers, and/or an address. It's never too early to let us know.

CT, editor

# The family I always wanted

"Hi family!"

I've said that more than a couple of times in meetings and heard it said even more. But what do I really mean when I say that? I don't have biological ties to the other addicts in the room like I do to my parents and siblings. And I hope never to experience in NA the feelings that were "normal" in my family.

I feel a different kind of tie with recovering addicts in my home group and with all of you whom I've not yet met. We are derived from a common stock and unified by a common conviction: addicts seeking and finding recovery. This is who we are. This is what we do. Those who have gone before are there in my home group every Friday with their experience to light the way for the fledglings who find their way to a seat. We nod, giggle, laugh, and cry as we relate to what's being shared.

We accept all people seeking recovery, not just those who have committed themselves solely to this fellowship. We try to be tolerant enough to allow them to share in the

manner with which they are most comfortable. We all remember that flood of fear the first time we shared—how crippling it would have been to be admonished to speak in particular words! We're simply grateful that the newcomer can find the courage just to introduce him or herself. We listen in wonderment as a regular member shares about the same dilemma for the twentieth time, and quietly pray that HP reveals a solution soon.

The first trusted friends I made in recovery, both female and male, have been members of my home group. Others have moved on, but remain trusted friends. My first experience with unconditional love was among these people at that particular meeting. I first felt personal value there. I learned how to give back there. I learned to be a part of, instead of apart from there. HP guided me to meet the man who is my husband there. Others helped me there, as I help others now the best I can.

The feelings I have for my home group members, and the feelings I experience at that meeting, are the kind I've always imagined exist in a "normal" family. We share together, socialize together, play together, support each other, and participate as members of each other's families. We care for each other, not only because we're all recovering addicts, but because our hearts have become bound together by another common bond: love. In this place, with these people, I feel at home, and I feel like a valued member of our family.

I truly believe that these members of my home group have saved my life



more times and in more ways than they can ever know. My gratitude will always run deep for those who started that meeting so many years ago, for those who keep it alive today, and to my Higher Power for making it possible for me to be there among them. Is it any wonder that I think my home group "family" is the best in the world?

*LS, Ohio*

## Selfless service builds self-esteem

Before I came into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I never believed, much less imagined, that I could live even a day without wanting to get high. I lived to use and used to live, period. No if's, and's, or but's. I dreaded the day that I wouldn't want to use. I thought it was impossible. I thought life would be boring. I'd become a square, and I'd never get any pleasure out of life, I thought. Boy, was I wrong!

Life has many things to offer, and today I can take advantage of them.

I've learned since coming into recovery that, by practicing the spiritual principles of NA in all my affairs, I can make positive changes in my life and, I assure you, they don't have to be boring.

I used to dwell on my misfortunes, sit on my pity-pot, kick myself in the ass, and cry, "Why me?" I thought that I wasn't good enough for anything. I had no respect for myself and felt hopeless. Suicide seemed the only way out of the pain, misery, and suffering that afflicted me. My self-esteem was dead and buried. I was derelict, homeless, useless, and I seriously thought I had nothing to live for.

I finally realized that I couldn't survive on my own, so I asked for help. Once I accepted that help, I learned to help myself. I went into a recovery house and I began to discover who I was. It was there that I saw the miracle of the NA program working through the addicts who shared at the H&I presentations. I knew then that there was hope, and I could get better. I learned that I was not unique. I heard that service was a key to recovery, and keys to recovery were just what I wanted. I was attracted and inspired by those addicts doing service and carrying the NA message of hope.

Although my first NA meetings were uncomfortable, I kept coming. I tried different meetings until I found a home group and got comfortable. Upon leaving the recovery house, I found that I had a lot of free time, so I got involved with service.

This is a fellowship of loving and caring people who don't care if you

have a nickel in your pocket or a hole in your head

Our Basic Text says, "We develop self-esteem as we help others find a new way of life." Doing service work has done many things for my self-esteem. Service has taught me about unconditional love and humility. It has taught me to appreciate my recovery and the little things in life. It gives me the opportunity to help others. I can share my experience, strength, and hope by writing for recovery newsletters and speaking in institutions. I can help by serving on the phoneline committee, answering phone calls from those seeking help. Or I can just reach out to the newcomer, and sometimes all that takes is a hug.

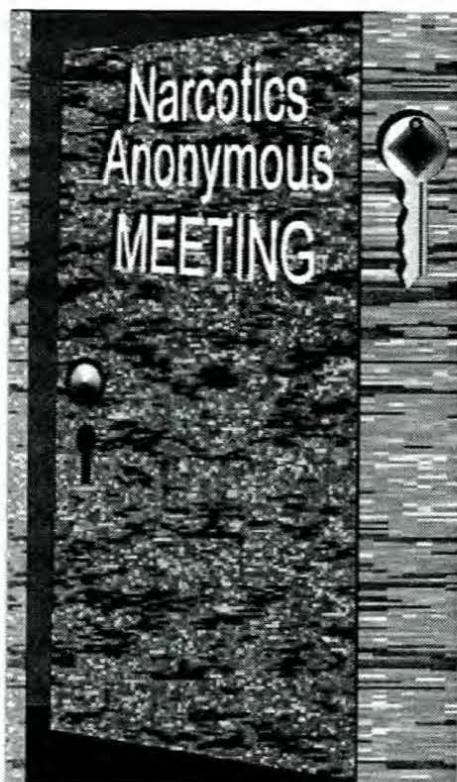
The Basic Text also says, "Learning to help others is a benefit of the Narcotics Anonymous program." It's a great feeling to have someone walk up to you after a meeting and say, "Thanks. You helped me a lot.", or "Thanks. I got a lot out of your message." This is what service does. It helps you feel better about yourself and subsequently builds self-esteem and self-confidence.

In the beginning I thought I was a "good-for-nothing." But today, the program of Narcotics Anonymous has given me a reason to live. It has given me a fellowship of loving and caring people who don't care if you have a nickel in your pocket or a hole in your head. They will accept you and love you until you learn to love yourself. I feel it's a blessing to be a recovering addict. I can now give back the unconditional love that was given to me.

Today, after being clean for a few twenty-fours, I am having the time of my life. I am enjoying myself to the fullest. I stay active in recovery, and I'm taking interest in the things I do today. I give and receive love and respect, not only from the addicts in the rooms, but from my family as well.

If you're new to NA, welcome! Strap yourself into your seat and wait for the miracle. If you want to know what the miracle is, just look in the mirror. Because if you didn't get high today, you are a miracle. Thanks to my Higher Power, so am I.

*RC, New York*





## Murphy's Law in recovery

I stumbled into this fellowship a little over two years ago, a basket case looking for a basket. I became part of a sponsorship family that encourages service, so early in my recovery I joined the activities subcommittee, which had no clean time requirement and did not entail any complicated thought processes. I met the criteria with no problem. I am still an active member of activities and currently hold the position of vice chairperson.

When I took this position, I expected it to be an easy job, that I would not be too heavily burdened with responsibility. Until last July, that was true.

In July, the chairperson was called out of town on family business. I had to take over the scheduled ice cream social/speaker meeting/dance, which ran from late afternoon to midnight. I was given money for supplies and start-up cash. The church was secured. I had picked up the key, done the shopping with a newcomer eager to pitch in, and all was going well. Somewhere along

the line, Murphy's Law went into effect and whatever could go wrong did!

It started with a bad judgment call on my part. Never leave money unattended, especially when it does not belong to you. The money left over from shopping mysteriously disappeared from my purse while I was unloading the supplies from the car. Right at that moment I couldn't afford to replace the money, so of course I panicked. I thought I would have to go back to the area service committee to ask for more money. And, of course, I thought I would be the center of a major scandal, with everyone thinking I stole the money.

But my recovery kicked in, and I called another addict whom I trust unquestioningly. My Higher Power was working through her, because I was at a total loss as to what to do. She agreed that I was responsible for replacing the money, but suggested that I need not try to explain the situation to anyone, that I could borrow the money from her and pay her back when I could. So things were okay again.

The event did not start out well. There were several other functions in adjoining areas that day and night, which made our turnout very small. The air conditioning went out during the ice cream social. The DJ set up his equipment and we held the speaker meeting in steadily increasing heat. Meanwhile, the maintenance man checked the system but had no idea what was wrong. Reading cards doubled as fans and we got through it.

After the meeting we moved to another part of the church building where the air conditioning still worked. Everybody pitched in to move the DJ's equipment and set up for the dance, and we settled down to some foot-stomping music, relieved to have air-conditioning. We were back on track again.

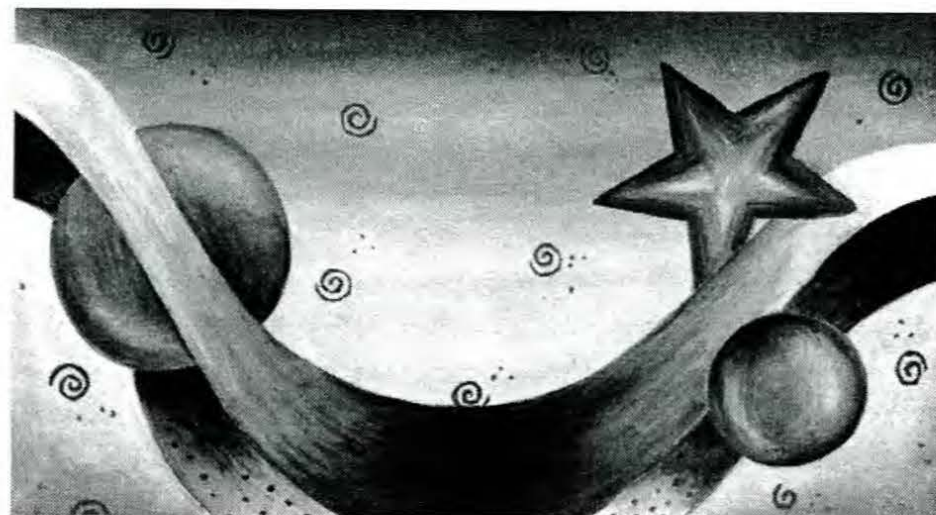
But wait, there's more! The DJ had recently acquired a device known as a "smoke pot," and activated it while I was over in the other part of the church cleaning up. The smoke alarm system went off, automatically sending a signal to the fire department. They arrived within minutes, along with the pastor of the church. Once again, things worked out. They said, "No harm done." The fire fighters danced a few steps, laughed a lot, and were on their way.

By this time I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but it wasn't over yet. The speaker that evening helped with refreshments, and I gave him

the keys to go to the ice machine for a bowl of ice. After he went home I realized that I forgot to get the keys back from him. We were left with no way to lock up the church! Luckily he lived close by, so we contacted him and he came back, returned the keys, and socialized for a while longer. We all hung in there and ended up dancing till midnight. A lot of people pitched in to help clean up. And the dance was a success.

This is not an experience I would choose to relive, although it was a profound learning experience. I have a deeper feeling for the unity of this fellowship and an enriched faith that all will be well eventually. I am grateful to activities for this growing experience and the chance to be responsible in the face of adversity. I'm grateful for all the help and support of other addicts. A lot of positives came out of negatives that night. We pulled together to turn an "off" evening into fun in recovery.

*JJ, Florida*





# The foundation of recovery

This last year has proven to be the hardest time in my life—clean or using. Through the fellowship and the grace of my Higher Power, I am still clean.

About eight years ago, my mother was stricken with breast cancer. I was still using at the time, so I didn't let myself feel anything about it. Sure I was a little scared, but I used more to cover it up.

Supposedly they got all of the cancer out, and things were good for about six-and-a-half years, or at least my mom told me everything was okay. Then she hurt her back and found that the cancer was in her bones.

I visited my mom at home after she got out of the hospital. She had lost about forty pounds and was very weak from chemotherapy. Deep inside I knew that the cancer would take her, but didn't want to accept it. Through working the steps and trusting my Higher Power, I made amends to her at this time. I no longer wanted to feel guilty about the harm that I had caused her. She was

so proud of how I worked my program, and it was a very healing time for both of us.

Her health was okay for six months. That changed drastically as the cancer took over. I was very scared, angry, and completely powerless over the situation and the way I felt.

When I first surrendered to my disease, I built a foundation of recovery for myself. The basic stuff: Get a sponsor; go to meetings; work the steps; be of service; get phone numbers and use them. At first I was on the pink cloud. After about a year, life got "real real." Life goes on whether you want it to or not. Stuffing feelings for fifteen years and then having to go through something like my mother's illness left me feeling shell-shocked.

My recovery would have collapsed if I hadn't built a strong foundation. I really made the most of it. I prayed and turned everything over to my HP. One of the things that NA stands for is "never alone," unless I choose to be. I shared about it, and even found a couple of people who had been through the same type of situation to share with me. I didn't have to go through this alone.

By September of last year, my mom could no longer care for herself. My brother and his wife took her in. I traveled back and forth whenever I could to be with her and my brother. She was on morphine for the pain, as there was nothing more the doctors could do. I could see how the morphine was affecting her, and I hated it. I had many chances to use some of it, but I chose not to. The disease was



telling me to block what I was feeling, but I didn't listen to it. This is the miracle of the program.

My mom died last October. I know she is in a better place now, and a part of her will always be with me.

The support and love I have received throughout all of this has been so important to me. I love this fellowship and the unconditional love I have been given by it. The only person who did love and support me be-

fore I became a member of NA was my mother. This fellowship has taught me how to love and accept love, feel my feelings and work through them. I wouldn't trade even these sad feelings for anything. Feeling sad is part of life, and it's necessary to be a whole person.

Build your own foundation, for you never know when you will really need it.

*AH, California*



# The most important step

Sometimes I hear other addicts talk in meetings about their "favorite step" or "the most important step." In my fifth year of recovery I have come to realize that, for me, the most important step is the one I need at the moment. The steps and the power of the spiritual principles that are embodied in them are my best coping tools.

Just for this day, however, I am struck by what seems like the greatest gift that I have been given in recovery: the gift of coming to believe through the Second Step.

A speaker I heard once said, "He who quibbles with Step Two, uses. It's just that simple." The bottom line is that this is a spiritual program. The solution to our problem is a spiritual solution. The problem is what I admitted to in Step One: this disease of addiction that affects me in all areas of my life and of which the actual using of drugs is but a symptom (a deadly symptom to be sure, but still just a symptom). The solution to this problem is in Step Two: a Power greater than myself. Working

Steps Three through Twelve is how I implement the solution.

I was raised by an addict father who taught me that the greatest power was "oneself." Myself was all there was to believe in, nothing greater.

My father died of this disease three years before I got clean. He died despite being in and out of the rooms for more than ten years and having been put in treatment programs eight times. He was never able to put together a continuous year clean during all this time. He continued to go back to using until his heart gave out.

As part of my Step Nine amends process, I journeyed back to his home and looked up his sponsor. I went to a meeting with this man, who had many years clean, and I asked him why my father just could not "get over it." His response was that, among other things, my father was never able to get Step Two. He was never able to really come to believe that there was a power greater than himself that he could turn to for help.

The help that I receive from my higher power has continued to do so much for me, more than even the astounding miracle of removing my obsession to use one day at a time. My higher power gives me moments of a true inner peace and serenity and a feeling of being in harmony with life that passes all understanding. My higher power has given me a feeling of being okay at a very fundamental level, even when I am in great pain or turmoil on the surface.

For all of my life before NA, at this deepest, most fundamental level of

my being, I had only a sense of being *not* okay, somehow out of place, a sense of vague impending doom or hopelessness, even when things seemed great and I was "happy" on the surface. I know today that my transformation began with the Second Step, and I understand what they meant when they said that I don't need to understand God; I just need to understand that I'm not it. This is what my father could never truly get.

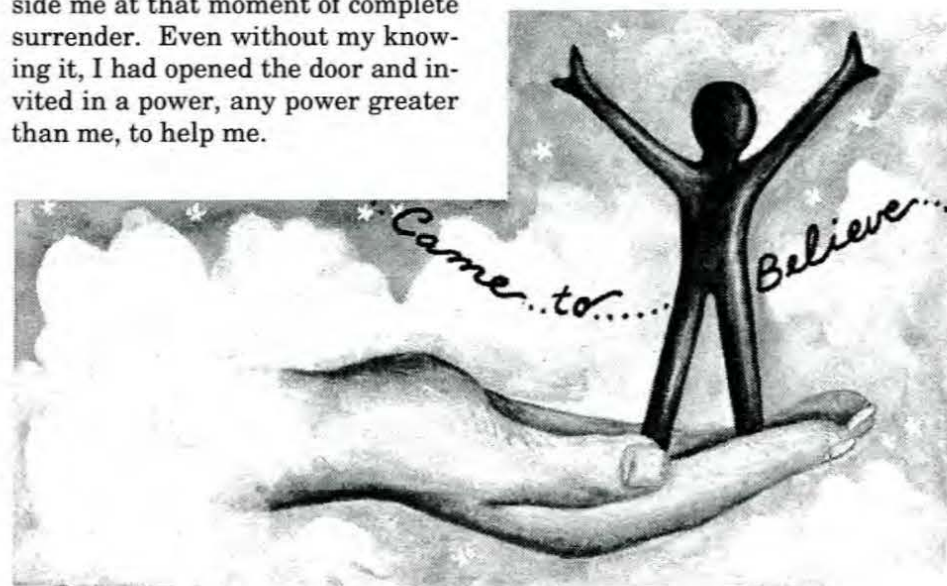
I don't know why I was given this precious gift and my father was not. I do know that I had to come to that point of deep and complete inner surrender, on my knees asking for help from something, anything, somewhere outside of myself. I remember that moment of not knowing to whom or to what I was pleading for help. I remember, even in my great pain, feeling stupid while I was doing it. But something began to change inside me at that moment of complete surrender. Even without my knowing it, I had opened the door and invited in a power, any power greater than me, to help me.

That instant of willingness and surrender has grown into this greatest of gifts: the increasing feeling of actually being comfortable in my own skin, even with unresolved problems. This feeling is in some way what I was always looking for. It is not there all the time, but it increases and grows as I continue to implement the solution by working the rest of the steps one day at a time.

I have learned to be very grateful for what I have been blessed with—this unmerited favor of grace.

In the beginning my sponsor told me that if I put only half the effort into the program that I put into using, the results would be beyond my wildest dreams. As I watched the sunrise this morning, and I experienced this feeling of truly being in harmony with my higher power and all of life, I knew what he meant.

*JM, Virginia*





## Carrying the message, not the mess

Just recently, newcomers from the local treatment center returned to our meetings after more than a year's absence.

We had lost the privilege of having treatment center clients at our Narcotics Anonymous group because of irresponsible behavior, i.e., opening meetings late, cursing excessively when sharing, and telling newcomers to "shut the f\_\_\_ up and listen."

Actually, the loss of the clients seemed to be another symptom that said one of the oldest groups in Oklahoma had a terminal illness and was dying. We lost the treatment center people shortly before the group's fifteenth birthday in October. Local members speculated that the group probably wouldn't last another year.

Next we lost our meeting place of many years because of a decline in attendance and donations. Home group members scattered. No one talked to each other any more. The ties that had held us together for years had broken.

Addicts had fought too long amongst themselves, defending their personalities and ideas as the gospel of Narcotics Anonymous. Nobody wanted to hear about hope, the NA message, responsibility, or forgiveness. Group members could not suspend their differences long enough to unite and reach out to the newcomer—and it showed.

Word got out. Sick meetings. Bickering and backbiting. NA is adolescent. "Let's go to the other, more stable fellowship," many said and then did. A few NA members held on by a thread. Perhaps one strand remained to hold us together.

Weeks passed as we met in members' homes. The meetings, which had once attracted thirty or forty members, now had only three or four in attendance. We had had ten meetings a week at the old site, but now had only three. We had no newcomers for months. Rumor had it that the meeting had closed. We held our annual New Year's Eve party—a dismal, poorly attended flop.

Eventually, we secured a meeting place. The rent was more than we could afford. Within months, we moved to a second place that charged the same rent. The meetings remained small, and group donations didn't cover expenses. Some group members were donating ten or twenty dollars a month over and above what they normally put in the basket just to help the group stay alive.

There were still very few newcomers coming to the meeting. We were shut out in the treatment community. We were being kicked at by

former NA members who had once labored faithfully for us, but who now attended another fellowship. That hurt.

Gradually, a few older members returned to meetings and we began seeing a few newcomers who had located us through the helpline. Our one H&I meeting—it had not been canceled at the treatment center—could have brought in newcomers, but no one supported it.

This situation is the oddest I have ever experienced in my recovery, which began in 1984. Previously, I had only seen NA grow through the years. I knew of NA members who would travel miles to support a new group or to attend service meetings. I knew of NA members who could disagree without being disagreeable. But not now. Not here.

Each week, the H&I meeting leader would arrive early for that meeting and watch the treatment center load about fifteen clients into a van to attend outside meetings of other fellowships. Clients wondered why they could not attend NA meetings. NA members were not around to answer.

Meanwhile, we continued to meet at our new facility. The group struggled with raising the rent money each month. We did not know if we would see our sixteenth birthday in October. We had quit hugging and shaking hands at the end of meetings. Morale was low and getting lower.

Something had happened that many had thought could never occur. Our group, the only home group that many had known throughout their

recovery, had crumbled. No one could fix it. We couldn't fix it because we were the ones who had broken it.

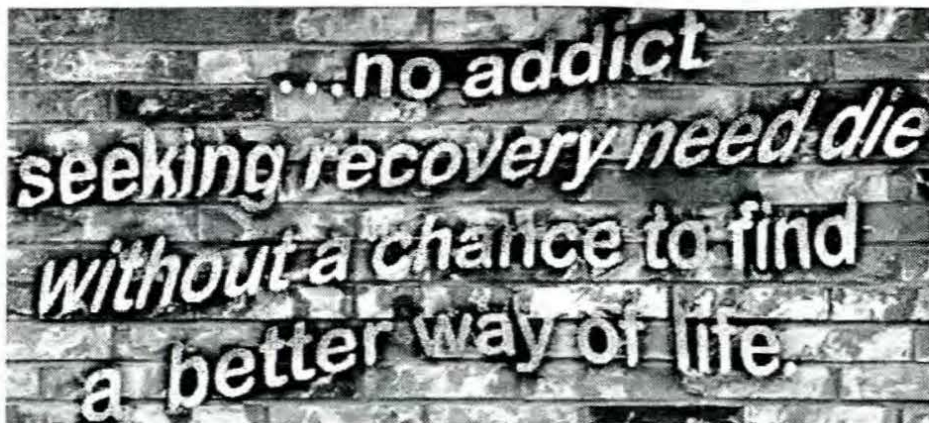
We continued to gather. The meetings remained small, with weak hugs and quick exits when the meeting ended. Donations increased a little, but we still couldn't function as a group. We needed everything—chips, recovery medallions, pamphlets, books, coffee, and hope.

*"Newcomers are the lifeblood of our fellowship, and we needed a transfusion."*

A break came when treatment center officials began allowing a few clients to attend outside NA meetings if responsible NA members escorted them.

The clients loved the NA meetings. The group responded to the newcomers, realizing a missing piece had been added to the group. Newcomers truly are the lifeblood of our fellowship, and we needed and responded to this transfusion. More members began returning. Donations increased to meet the rent. Addicts had not realized how much they missed having a gaggle of newcomers—who questioned, blushed at, and expressed fear of the disease of addiction—at meetings. Enthusi-





asm improved with each meeting. Addicts interested in NA began to ask when and where the meeting was held. God had helped us turn a corner, but we were not out of the woods yet.

In August, treatment center officials began allowing several patients to attend NA meetings under the escort of one NA member. This decision meant that fewer NA members could escort more newcomers to meetings.

Group members began gathering again after meetings at the local coffee shop to talk about hope and the NA message. Forgiveness would come later.

Several weeks passed and a few group members began supporting the H&I meeting at the treatment center. Likewise, we being consistent in opening group meetings on time and in carrying a positive recovery message into the facility. However, we did not ask treatment officials to return their clients to us in full force on a weekly basis. It was not time. We needed to work on ourselves first.

The few newcomers we escorted boosted our meetings, but they could not be used as a quick fix for deep resentment and hurt among group members. We needed to know if we really believed in NA and its message. Were we really going to accept each other and strive for unity, or were we just going to talk about it? Can group members work it out instead of running off, screaming "Foul!"? The group would stand or fall on these points.

Time passed and some forgiveness was offered among members. Others laughed because they had forgotten the reasons they argued months before.

On 4 October 1994, the treatment center van waddled into the group driveway, top-heavy with eager newcomers. It had been more than a year, but they had returned. The chair selected "We Do Recover" as the meeting's topic for the night. We were fourteen newcomers and twelve regular group members. The meeting was exceptional, with honest sharing and home group members responding to the newcomers.

Following the meeting, the van driver, who doubles as a counselor, said he had never before seen an NA group reach out to newcomers the way we had extended ourselves to them after the meeting. This meant a lot coming from him, because he was the same person who said last year that he would never bring the treatment center's clients back to our group again.

That driver now transports newcomers to our group once a week and we continue to conduct an H&I meeting in the facility. Treatment officials have asked us to conduct a second H&I meeting in their facility, but we cannot commit to it at this time. We are still rebuilding. At the group, some members remain cautious, but signs of acceptance and love are returning. We might make it because hugs are strong again and smiles abound. We are refastening our ties.

A question: Did the treatment center save our group by allowing its clients to return? No. But it helped. I believe time heals, and I believe we really understand now that the newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, not so much for them, but because they make us stretch and become more than we were. And in our stretching, we survive—the group survives.

*OG, Oklahoma*

## PBPGNFWMY

When I finished doing my Fifth Step with my sponsor a few weeks ago, we discussed at length the Sixth Step and my willingness to have God remove my defects of character. At that point, I was able to readily identify many of those flaws, yet I was still blind to some of the most detrimental defects in my personality.

I have since discovered that sometimes it takes a serious situation or set of circumstances to really strip back the facade and get to the heart of the matter. The last few weeks have provided me with just such a scenario. The events that transpired are all relevant to what I have learned, though it's not necessary for me to go into detail about them.

The final occurrence that drove home the message was a very painful and traumatic experience in my fiancée's life. Through her suffering, I had an opportunity to learn how to be a true friend in someone's hour of need. Unfortunately, I didn't avail myself of the opportunity. What I learned about myself was how utterly selfish and self-centered I can be, and what a stupendous capacity I have for trying to play God in other people's lives.

This shouldn't have come as that much of a surprise to me, as I have



paid lip service to this condition with my sponsor and others in the past. However, there is a tremendous spiritual distance between the intellectual acknowledgment of a problem and the actual understanding of how much pain we inflict on ourselves and others with the insensitivity and callousness that are the by-products of self-obsession.

Rather than allow my fiancée to go through her situation in whatever fashion she needed to, I sought to pull her out of it and get her to pay attention to me and my feelings during her time of loss and grieving. The end result was me attacking her and criticizing her, just at the time she most needed me just to be her friend and allow her to be herself.

I have talked to my sponsor about what I did and have made my apologies to my fiancée, but if that is all I do about it, I have not learned anything in my recovery. Too many times in the past, I have apologized to people for the same thing over and over again. If I am to continue to grow spiritually, then I must not only identify my defects of character and become willing to have them removed if possible, I must change. Otherwise, I'll continue to hurt those who care for me most, and in the end drive them away as I have always done in the past.

It has been said to me many times that recovery is a process, not a destination. I am learning that it is a process that can be fun at times, and horribly painful at other times. Either way, going through the process is necessary if I am to ever achieve the quality of life that I desire in my

recovery. It is also critical if I am ever going to learn how to be a friend to others.

A very long time ago, a man I respected gave me a little button to wear. All that was on the button were the letters, "PBPNGFWMY." He told me to wear it proudly, and said that it would help me learn about humility and give me a deeper understanding of my journey through life.

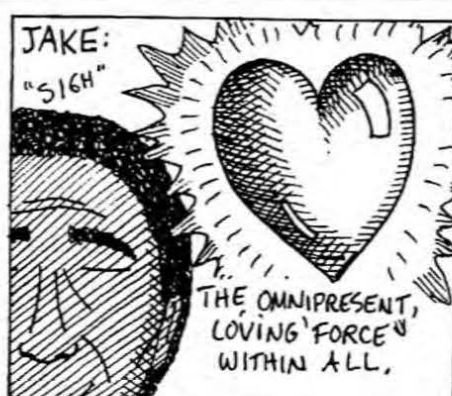
Like you, I couldn't figure out what message these letters contained that would be of any help at all to me in life. I had to ask. He smiled and explained, "Please Be Patient, God's Not Finished With Me Yet."

That's why I wrote this article. It's a reminder to myself that even though I fall short of my own expectations, I am simply on a journey through life via the road of recovery. It does me little good to beat myself up over the mistakes I make in life, nor does it help me if I focus on my defects with an overly critical eye. If I look back upon my life, particularly the time that I have been clean, I can really see how far I've come today. On the other hand, if I look to the future I can see how truly far I still have to go to become the person that I want to be. In the meantime, I just need to remind myself that God's not finished with me yet.

*RU, Iowa*

## Home Group

*God as they understand God.  
The Home Group's HP's*







# Newsletters

## We're not doctors

**From *Clean Times*, the Funcoast, Florida area newsletter:**

Recently, I have attended a few meetings where the topic has turned to addicts who need to take medication for medical conditions or mental disorders.

I've listened to what some NA members have had to say about other addicts taking these prescribed medications. I've listened to a lot of well-intentioned addicts giving advice that should come from someone with a degree in such matters. I've always been told in the program that we should share our experience, strength, and hope *about recovery* with still-suffering addicts, so I don't understand this advice-giving.

Two years ago, I had to start taking certain prescription medications for a minor heart condition and for something known as panic and anxiety disorder. I've listened to people

say that we should push on and go through these things without medications. Sometimes I just want to cry out to other addicts who haven't had experience with this or other problems. What I want to yell out is, "Who the hell do you think you are, giving medical or psychological advice? Do you have degrees in medicine or a license in psychotherapy? If not, I really feel that you need to stop giving advice on a subject you know nothing about for the sake of us who for some medical reason need to take prescription medications."

I think of my sponsor's words on this. He says, "I'm not a doctor or a therapist. I can only tell you that if something is prescribed for you by a doctor and it is taken as prescribed, you are doing the correct thing."

For a long time, because of things other addicts said to me, I felt like I was using while attending meetings.

Today, I have a different outlook. Yes, I am an addict who takes medications for a specific problem, and I am under a doctor's care. My situation is no different than a diabetic who takes insulin and no different than a cancer victim who gets chemotherapy. Today, I know that I am clean.

I feel that as addicts we need to share our own experience, strength, and hope within the guidelines of

this program. I suggest that everyone read the *In Times of Illness* booklet and the *Sponsorship* pamphlet.

SW

## Don't kick the cat

**From *Basic News*, the Lower Mainland multi-area newsletter, Vancouver, Canada:**

I've heard it, you've heard it, it's been said a thousand times... "I came through the doors of NA for years before I finally got it."

Relapse is a death-defying kick at the cat of insanity for some, and for others, a satin-lined box. Either way, the option stinks, so I had to ask, "Why do so many of us go back out?"

The first thing that became very clear to me is that there's no such thing as a "slip." The word "slip" implies something happening by accident. How do you get stoned by accident? "I had a slip" is the single most ridiculous statement I have ever heard at an NA meeting, and it enrages me when I hear it. Let me guess, you went to the bathroom to take a leak and accidentally stuck a rig in your arm? I don't think so!

I believe relapse is a process and that picking up is the last stage of that process. And if you regard the NA Basic Text as gospel, as I do, then you already know that a relapse is definitely preventable. So what

signs do I watch for in my own behavior, signs that may indicate that I'm on the road to relapse?

From what I have learned and from what I could gather from "Recovery and Relapse" in our Basic Text; there seem to be three self-defeating steps that could inevitably lead me back to hell:

- 1) Isolation
- 2) Procrastination
- 3) Apathy

Knowing these steps lead to relapse, I have to ask myself daily if I have taken any of them. If I answer yes, I immediately take the necessary steps to correct the ill behaviors.

Other trouble areas for me could be loneliness, placing unrealistic expectations on myself or others, and trying to predict what may or may not happen. I might get into self-pity. I may lose my willingness or open-mindedness. I may start to forget how bad it really was out there. I may begin to feel like I am trapped or bored.

There are lots of ways for me to start back on the path to self-destruction, so I must be very aware of my own feelings, thoughts, and actions. I constantly have to be accountable for my thoughts and actions. It's important for me to know where I'm at emotionally at all times. Certainly there have been times when I felt slightly unbalanced emotionally, and people would ask, "What's wrong?" I sometimes answer, "I don't know what's wrong," not because I want to hide or mask my feelings. Quite simply, I really don't know.



After being desensitized for so long, I find it difficult to identify emotions. Sometimes my only option is to let nature run its course. Sometimes I have to sit in it for a day or two before the problem shows itself to me.

Once that happens, I take a serious look at the issue at hand. I look for ways to deal with my feelings in a positive way, and I try to find a way to grow from the experience. If I am incapable of doing those things, I call my sponsor.

Today I want and need to stay clean. I know I have but three options:

- 1) To relapse and ride it out to the bitter end.
- 2) To play the revolving-door game: relapse, detox, relapse.
- 3) Stay clean—one day at a time!

For me, the third is really the only option. My opinion on relapse is very strong—just don't do it! And thus far, I have practiced what I preach. Certainly, the desire to use enters my head, but I don't buy into it. I know the desire to use will pass. And it does.

When I entertain the thought of using, I have but one question to ask myself: "What will it cost?" I answer that in the form of a numbered list:

- 1) Every dime I've got or can steal.
- 2) My sanity.
- 3) My physical health.
- 4) My children and my mother.
- 5) My boyfriend, or friends in general.

- 6) My job.
- 7) My home.
- 8) School.
- 9) My spiritual, mental, and emotional stability.
- 10) My dreams.
- 11) My life.

All things considered, the price is far too high!

I tried for nineteen years to control my using, and I am a very resourceful woman. I know in my heart that there is simply no way I can ever get control. If there was, I'd be doing it.

My message is often dark, but I believe it to be realistic. I often read "Relapse and Recovery" in the Basic Text and believe it shares my dark opinion on relapse. Relapse can and has been a part of many addicts' early days in NA, but it doesn't have to be. It cannot be part of my recovery, because I don't want to die.

Relapse can be the destructive force that kills us or leads us to the realization of who and what we really are. The eventual misery of using is not worth the temporary escape it might give us. For us, to use is to die, often in more ways than one.

In the Basic Text it says, "A relapse, if we survive it, may provide the charge for the demolition process. A relapse, and sometimes subsequent death of someone close to us, can do the job of awakening us to the necessity for vigorous personal action."

For me, relapse suggests the strong possibility of death. And, just for today, I will not die alone on a cold bathroom floor. Today, I am grateful

to be alive. Gratitude keeps me clean lots of days. When the going gets tough, I make a gratitude list. The first thing I put on the list is that I am thankful to be alive. Dying as a result of an overdose would really screw up my gratitude.

In total surrender, in admitting I am powerless, I actually gain power over my own destiny because today I have a choice. I have a choice about whether or not I lose everybody and everything in my life. Today I choose to be thankful and to keep the many gifts my Higher Power has blessed me with.

I've heard it said that some of us must die, so others can live. Don't do me any favors! I am going to stay clean today, whether you live or die. So live and let's make this wonderful journey together.

*K, Vancouver*

## Home all over the world

**From *Basic News*, the Lower Mainland multi-area newsletter, Vancouver, Canada:**

I recently returned from the World Service Conference. This conference went on for a week and met

every day. Most days the meetings started at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 11:00 p.m., but there were some days we finished by 5:00 p.m.

Although it is a physically tiring and demanding period of time, the rewards are found not only in being a part of the process of NA as a whole, but the personal interaction we get to enjoy and the information exchange with other NA members.

Hearing how difficult it is just to have NA in some areas of South America, or how they never know when soldiers may come and take away family members whose politics differ from those in power, makes me grateful for the ease in which meetings take place where I live and also the freedom I have.

Hearing that in India, a person must often make the choice between feeding his family or buying a pamphlet makes me aware of how well off we are in our country.

Hearing about Arabs and Jews sharing in the same NA meeting in Israel makes me ever aware that NA crosses all boundaries.

Listening to all the different accents from the United States, England, New Zealand, France, Germany, Sweden, and other countries makes me aware that this is a worldwide fellowship.

The best experience of all was going to a regular NA meeting after the conference was over. Addicts are addicts everywhere, and I felt just as comfortable as I would have in my home group. No matter where I go, when I enter into the rooms of NA, I know I'm home!

*WS, Vancouver*





# On appreciating our differences

I have traveled in many states, attending meetings wherever I went. I am inspired by the recovery I experience consistently in this fellowship, in spite of the continually shifting trends and attitudes in society at large.

*It Works: How and Why* has gone far in relating issues of cultural and ethnic diversity directly to recovery. The Third Tradition is linked directly to diversity in the essay, ex-

This diversity is further linked to our members' various cultural backgrounds and approaches to life. "NA is made up of a vastly diverse assortment of addicts joined together by the strength of their mutual commitment to recovery. We speak many different languages and live in different cultures."

Some put down multiculturalism as being the "new tribalism" or "politically correct." This trend, it seems to me, runs counter to the spirit of NA. In spite of what goes on in the world around us, it must not distract us from carrying the message to any addict who still suffers, because "each time our focus is diverted from our primary purpose, the addict seeking recovery loses out."

This fundamental welcome to anyone of any culture, spiritual tradition, ethnic minority, heritage, or community is not an "outside issue." If I share that I am hurt by someone at a meeting because they cannot respect my heritage, race, or culture, I have the right to do so. "While a particular problem may be an outside issue, its effect on our recovery is not; everything affecting a recover-

For this reason, we may be linked by our disease of addiction, but we are not all the same. I hope others will not forbid me my culture or patronize it by, for example, making sure they tell me how much Indian blood they happen to have, or that they want me to get them involved in our native ceremonies. Once I was even told I must put aside my Indian activities and beliefs or I would get loaded. I guess this person saw it as a duty to force me into a non-Indian cultural mold.

NA helps me appreciate my culture more than I did when I was younger and using. My recovery allows me, if appropriate, in another setting, to invite others to Indian activities, but I may also lovingly remind non-Indians that they also have a culture. I hope they reclaim it and cherish it as part of their recovery.

More than cultural diversity distinguishes our membership. When I study our NA literature, I find appreciation of our differences. In fact, our diversity is our strength.

DA, Oregon

# We're all responsible

What exactly is the "thirteenth step"? We talk a lot about it. We talk about those addicts who "thirteenth step" the newcomer as though they are dogs that should be whipped and then shot.

My definition of the "thirteenth step" is relatively simple. An addict with some clean time, and sometimes a lot of time, takes undue advantage of a newcomer. It appears more blatant in the male of our species, but there are surely females who also rigorously work this "step."

Newcomers arrive on our doorstep with little or no self-esteem. They are certainly at the mercy of their feelings. With no dope to protect the frail balance between sanity and the insanity of believing that their feelings will kill them, newcomers can become easy marks for those members who have some time but don't have enough recovery to have changed old behaviors.

I know that, even today, getting laid can certainly stop my feelings of being inadequate, unlovable, useless, and worthless, so I shouldn't be surprised that a newcomer might feel the same way.

Out there, I lay down to get dope, attention, money, status, recognition, to be a part of, to be one of the



"in" crowd, and a thousand other reasons.

When I came through the doors, I was starved for attention. I appreciated any attention that made me feel good, even if, like the dope, it only lasted a little while.

I was told, "No relationships for a year!" and "Don't sleep with anyone you wouldn't want to spend the rest of your life with." I didn't like it; I thought others were trying to control me. But for some reason, I was willing to do as I was told.

By the grace of my Higher Power, there were women in the meetings who took me in and showed me a new way of life that didn't require me to do anything on my back, a way of life that allowed me to stand up and say no.

The foundation of my program was built in those first weeks and months and years. I spent my early recovery doing things that helped me feel good about myself. I did service work. I carried the message into jails and hospitals. I helped newcomers as best I could. And, with my sponsor, I worked *only* the Twelve Steps and learned about the traditions.

Back then, it seemed that everyone had a sponsor who had a sponsor, everyone went to step meetings, and everyone protected the newcomer.

I want to say that I got what I needed from the other women in NA because we were such a small community back in those days. I know in my heart of hearts that isn't the reason at all. We had a lot of meetings even in those days. But something has changed. It seems that the newcomer, "the most important person in

the room," has somehow become the sacrificial lamb of the god of growth.

I wonder how that happened and I know that I must take some of the responsibility, for somehow I have failed to carry the message that I was given. It's a privilege to be vigilant and rigorously honest in my sharing, to give back what I was so freely given. I have abused the privilege by not doing my part, either in my sharing or in my actions.

Who are these "thirteenth stepers"? A sad lot, I guess.

My experience is that a number of them have been around for a long time. They sound good in meetings. They tend to preach about the traditions, and thump the Basic Text. But based on their actions, they have very little recovery, and have somehow "worked" some or all of the steps with no obvious results.

My first sponsor gave me some great information, and apparently I have not passed it on in a way that made a difference before, so I pass it on to you now. She said:

"If they sound good in meetings, follow them out into the parking lot and keep a close eye on their actions.

"Not everyone is our rooms is about recovery. There are those who would use their fellow addicts just as they used people when they were out there using. They aren't bad people, just sad cases who are incapable of being honest with themselves. They very likely have a desire for a new way of life, but are unwilling to give up old and destructive behavior. Unfortunately, their behavior often harms those who innocently trust and believe that a quantity of clean

time has something to do with recovery. You must pray for them, for they will not find any peace or serenity through their own actions. They are truly the addict who still suffers, maybe more so than the addict out there shooting dope. It is your responsibility to recognize those who still suffer from this grave disease and, without judging them, keep the rooms safe for others.

"You can only hold your breath for so long in this program. If you don't do the work, and there is a lot of it, you will eventually die or go stark raving mad. You can pretend to uphold the spiritual principles of this program for just so long and then it all comes crashing down. Practicing old behavior will eventually take you out of our rooms, and out of your mind."

*LB, Virginia*

## A bad trip

Recently my boyfriend and I went on vacation to a place in the western United States. We live in North Carolina and were really excited about attending some out-of-town meetings, especially all the way on the other side of the country.

En route to our destination, we had a three-hour layover in the Midwest. We decided to call the NA phoneline and see if we could make a meeting while waiting for our flight. When we called, we were greeted by

an answering machine giving us times for meetings held on Monday, and at the end we could leave a name and number. There were two problems: The day we were there was Tuesday, not Monday, and we were in an airport, unable to leave a number for someone to call us back. I was grateful I was not new to the program, in desperate need of a meeting or someone to talk to. At first, I told myself that someone just forgot to change Monday's tape to Tuesday's, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized how this kind of thing is becoming a real problem for NA. It also occurred to me that if someone had not changed the tape by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, when was the last time the machine had been checked for messages?

When we arrived at our destination, we looked forward to going to a meeting and seeing new, but familiar, faces. We slept and the next morning began trying to call the local NA phoneline. The line was busy. I called the operator, but she wouldn't check the number unless I paid her two dollars. For two days we got a busy signal. We were very disappointed at not being able to get to a meeting while there, and were angry because we couldn't reach someone from NA. What if we wanted to use? What if we just felt bad or full of character defects, and wanted to talk to another recovering addict?

Thanks to my Higher Power, I didn't have any obsessions, but I kept wondering what would happen to a newcomer in this place.

Someone told me later that maybe I could have called AA. I never thought of that because I've always



found everything I needed in NA. That is, until I left town.

Upon returning home, I called the number for the phonenumber in the town we had been in. Much to my surprise, it was not busy. I told the answering service that I wanted someone from NA to return my call. I wanted to let the fellowship in that town know what had happened because I was concerned and, to be honest, I was angry.

The answering service put me on hold for five minutes then hung up on me. I called back, very angry at this point, and again asked for someone to call me back. The lady on the other end asked why, and I explained that I wanted to inform someone from NA about the line being busy for two days, and that someone had put me on hold for five minutes, knowing I was calling long distance, and then hung up on me. She responded very rudely, telling me to "call the national organization or something, because we're just the answering service and have nothing to do with it." Then she hung up.

At this point, my patience flew out the window, my anger reached new heights, and my character defects flared! I understand that the area phonenumber committee is not at fault for what the answering service did, or how they respond to people. I just wanted to let them know what had happened, so if they had received other complaints they might consider other options for their phonenumber. I was also very concerned with what may happen if someone new to the program were to have this happen to them.

I'm told that NA's membership is growing and we're going to have to mature as an organization to keep up. I can't argue with this because everything is a growing process, so why not this, too? But I still feel concern and anger over the fact that our phonenumber are so lacking. How are we supposed to "grow" into it if there are no trusted servants to help us in that process?

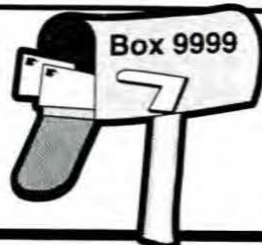
We say we want to grow and reach out to the new person in the fellowship. But how are we going to do that when newcomers can't find us?

These are questions I am looking at on a personal level also. Maybe this has been a sign from my Higher Power to get more involved again with PI. I used to be very involved in service, but after moving to a new area I let go of my service work, partially out of fear and insecurity. Maybe this can be a gift in my own recovery, and I can get involved in service again. I'm sure this all happened for a reason and, if I'm willing, I can learn from it and grow through it.

I just hope anyone reading this will think about service and realize that the phrase, "we can't keep what we have unless we give it away," doesn't apply only to meetings. It also applies to the inner workings of NA as a whole. When I do service work, I do it to give back, but you know, I always, without exception, get back even more.

*RW, North Carolina*

## From our readers



### Committed

When I finally admitted to myself that I couldn't live as long as I was using drugs, I became a member of Narcotics Anonymous. At that point, I made a commitment to myself to do what I had to do to stay clean. Little did I realize the enormity of my commitment.

Not using drugs allowed reality to kick in, and it kicked in strongly! Being in my late thirties and not knowing how to live life on life's terms was terrifying for me. When I began to realize that I didn't know how to live, with or without drugs, I was devastated and full of fear and doubt. But I couldn't go backward, so I surrendered to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of this program. I again affirmed my commitment to do whatever I had to do to stay clean.

Through a Higher Power of my understanding, the members of the program, and the steps and traditions, I began to see solutions to my dilemma. But was I willing to go to any lengths to recover?

As I keep approaching, choosing, and passing beyond forks in the road of recovery, I continue to affirm my commitment to stay clean. At times, the effort seems enormous: prayer and meditation, practicing the

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, writing, sharing, letting go, helping the newcomer, service, and sponsorship.

Sometimes I get tired. Sometimes I wonder if it's worth it. Then I think of my last high and the commitment I made to myself, and I just keep coming—one day at a time.

*LM, Michigan*

### What do using and Mondays have in common?

I've always prayed for faith. I figure it is the most important thing. With faith, I will always believe that God has the power to see me through any situation. Although my faith has been tested, listening to many people share has made me realize how truly fortunate I am to have received this long-sought-after gift.

A fellow addict really brought it home to me when she shared her great distress over Mondays. Every week she gets sick with apprehension over Monday. Talk about not keeping it in today! My heart ached for her as she explained her dread over each upcoming week—how on earth could she get through it? I went away wondering where this girl's faith in her Higher Power was. In fact, she only referred to HP as *the* Higher Power, not *her* Higher Power.



I feel that a God of my understanding is *mine*, not "the." I believe this personal relationship and faith in HP is essential to the recovering addict.

We need to practice faith and belief in a power greater than ourselves in all aspects of our lives, not simply in the cause and effect of our substance addiction. If we truly believe, as I do, in the disease concept, then it is necessary to turn our lives—not just our using drugs—over to the care of God as we understand Him. We have to do this so that He might make us whole (restore us to sanity) in every aspect of our lives, not simply in helping us put down our drug of choice.

We are insane individuals, and chaos tends to get to us in any form it can. We need to pray for faith in our HP in order to achieve true serenity. Faith will give us the peace of mind and heart we need to slow down, stop worrying, and truly take each day as it comes, trusting that, miraculous as it is, a God of our understanding saw us through active addiction. Is there anything God can't do? A simple Monday should be a piece of cake.

LLM, New York

## A different kind of fiend

I write you this note on my fourth NA birthday. This is one way that I can share with my brothers and sisters that this program works.

Before the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous found me, I was a hopeless, helpless addict in the firm grip of active addiction. I did all the things that I had to do to survive.

Today, my life is much simpler in many respects, but I still have to do the things I need to do in order to survive: have a higher power, use a sponsor, work steps with other recovering addicts, and give back what was so freely given to me.

I sat in the RSC meeting today very thankful for the ability to be of service to others. The Basic Text tells me that the only way I can keep what I have is to give it away. My sponsor tells me to lead by example. My higher power shows me how and where to do that.

The benefits that I have gained as a result of being of service far outweigh the sacrifices that I have made in my personal life. After all, my personal life wasn't that great before I got here. I have been transformed from a hopeless dope fiend to a very grateful, dopeless hope fiend.

Anonymous

# Comin' up

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

## CANADA

**British Columbia:** 1-3 Sept.; 4th Oh-Yah-Man Campout; Oyama; info: (604) 549-4693; OAC, PO Box 1928, Vernon, British Columbia, Canada V1T 7G8

**Nova Scotia:** 4-6 Aug.; 6th Annual Nova Scotia Area Convention; Teuro; info: (902) 477-1983 or (902) 457-3014; NSACNA, Box 65, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2L4

## FINLAND

**Uusimaa:** 26-27 Aug.; 7th Finnish Convention; Helsinki; info: 358-0-135-11-52

## GERMANY

**Nordrhein-Westfalen:** 18-20 Aug.; 5 Years of NA Bochum, Germany Celebration; info: (49) 0234/3 40 53; Narcotics Anonymous, c/o Haus der Begegnung, Alsenstrasse 19A, Bochum, Germany 44789

**Lower Saxony:** 24-26 Nov.; 10 Years in Bremen Convention; info: 0421/50 39 49; 10 Jahre, Bürgerzentrum, Am Nonnenberg, 28 239 Bremen/Oslebshause, Germany

## IRELAND

**Galway:** 3-5 Nov.; 11th Irish Convention; Galway; info: 8300911, ext. 486; Common Bond, 4/5 Eustace Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Dorset:** 22-24 Sept.; 9th UK Convention; Bournemouth International Center, Bournemouth; info: UKSO, PO Box 1980, London, England N19 3LS

## UNITED STATES

**California:** 4-6 Aug.; Southern California Regional Convention; Palm Springs; rsvns: (619) 322-6000 ext. 2708 or (800) 872-4335; info: (818) 396-1882 or (909) 824-9104; SCRCNA, 1935 S Myrtle, Monrovia, CA 91016

2) 25-27 Aug.; 6th Annual Campout; Oakwood Lake Resort; info: Set Em Free Campout, PO Box 1837, Soquel, CA 95073

**Connecticut:** 18-21 Aug.; Greater New Haven Area Campout; Camp Farnham, Durham; info: (203) 230-8265 or (203) 497-8733; Campout, Box 808, North Haven, CT 06573

2) 29-30 Sept. - 1 Oct.; United Shoreline Area Spiritual Weekend; Enders Island, Mystic; info: (203) 767-3299; Weekend, PO Box 354, Centerbrook, CT 06409

**Florida:** 4-6 Aug.; South Dade Area Unity Weekend; Miami Beach; rsvns: (800) 327-6656; info: (305) 667-8948; Unity Weekend, Box 141514, Coral Gables, FL 33114

2) 18-20 Aug.; 1st Uncoast Area Convention; Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (904) 375-9624; Uncoast Convention, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

**Hawaii:** 25-27 Aug.; Maui Gathering; Camp Keanae YMCA, Maui; info: (808) 572-1299 or (808) 575-2122; Maui Gathering, PO Box 707, Makawao, HI 96768

2) 19-22 Oct.; 4th Hawaii Regional Convention; Turtle Bay Hilton, Oahu; info: (808) 236-3408; Convention, 98-456 Hoomailani Place, Pearl City, HI 96782

**Illinois:** 15-17 Sept.; 5th Wilderness Retreat & Dance, Pig & Turkey Roast; 4H Campgrounds, Jacksonville; info: (217) 789-6519; Box 6451, Springfield, IL 62708

**Maine:** 22-24 Sept.; Southern Maine Area Convention; Alfred; info: SMASC, Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

**Maryland:** 4-6 Aug.; 3rd Free State Regional Convention; St. John's College, Annapolis; info: (410) 787-0086 or (410) 437-8883; Box 4321, Baltimore, MD 21223

**Michigan:** 27-29 Oct.; 4th Annual Kalamazoo Area Convention; Kalamazoo; info: (616) 649-4738; Convention, Box 50822, Kalamazoo, MI 49005



**Missouri:** 22-24 Sept.; 4th Multiregional Learning Day; Kansas City, Missouri; rsvns: (816) 464-2345; info: (316) 232-5636; Box 10854, Midwest City, OK 73140

**Nebraska:** 18-20 Aug.; Wyobaska Area Unity Days; Scotts Bluff; info: (308) 783-2560; Unity Days, Box 262, Minatare, NE 69356

**2)** 13-15 Oct.; Nebraska Regional Convention; Hastings; rsvns: (402) 463-6721; info: (402) 462-4852; NRC, Box 684, Hastings, NE 68902

**New Jersey:** 11-13 Aug.; 5th Northern New Jersey Regional Convention; New Brunswick; info: (201) 676-4481; NNJRCC, Box 1019, Maplewood, NJ 07040

**2)** 27-29 Oct.; 1st Northeast New Jersey Area Convention; Elizabeth; info: (908) 382-5075 or (908) 241-8021; Box 409, Roselle, NJ 07203

**New York:** 26 Aug.; Greater New York Region's Music Fest; Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island; info: (718) 447-3961; Box 246, Staten Island, NY 10306

**North Carolina:** 18-20 Aug.; Carolina Regional Awareness Weekend; Raleigh; rsvns: (919) 782-8800; info: (803) 762-2471; Awareness Weekend, c/o RSO, 1327 Beaman Place #9, Greensboro, NC 27408

**2)** 8-10 Sept.; Central Piedmont Area Convention; Salisbury; info: (704) 875-3590 or (704) 663-0560; rsvns: (704) 637-3100; CPANA, Box 1294, Mooresville, NC 28115

**Ohio:** 4-6 Aug.; 1st Tri-Area Convention; Cleveland; info: (216) 663-4025; Box 33372, North Royalton, OH 44133

**2)** 13-15 Oct.; Ohio Regional Twelve Step Retreat; Tar Hollow State Park, Chillicothe; info: (614) 539-9614 or (419) 342-4003

**Oklahoma:** 11-13 Aug.; 10-1/2 Annual Northside Stroll and Troll Chicken Flyin' Contest; Greenleaf State Park, Braggs; info: (918) 744-0956

**Oregon:** 25-27 Aug.; 3rd NA Campout and Fish-Fry; Canal Creek State Campground; info: (503) 265-9347 or (503) 574-9169; Box 811, Depoe Bay, OR 97341

**2)** 29 Sept. - 1 Oct.; 18th Pacific Northwest Convention; info: PNWCNA-18, Box 80146, Portland, OR 97280

**3)** 24-26 Nov.; Mid-Willamette Area Convention; Wilsonville; info: (503) 390-1457 or (503) 390-5872; send speaker tapes to: Committee, 5279 Pleasant Court, Keizer, OR 97303

**Pennsylvania:** 25-27 Aug.; Mason-Dixon Area Convention; Wilson College, Chambersburg; info: (717) 642-5023 or (717) 749-5815; Box 478, Fairfield, PA 17320

**South Carolina:** 25-27 Aug.; North Central Carolina Area Campout; Woodstick Campground, Spartanburg; info: (803) 591-1060 or (803) 579-3456; NCCNA, Box 1782, Spartanburg, SC 29304

**Tennessee:** 16-17 Sept.; 1st Middle Tennessee and Greater Nashville Area Mini-Convention; Nashville; rsvns: (615) 361-7666; info: (615) 776-2149; Unified in '95, 5049 Briarwood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211

**2)** 6-8 Oct.; Surrender Under the Stars Campout; Chatanooga; info: (615) 622-1939; Planning Committee, Box 23024, Chattanooga, TN 37422

**3)** 22-26 Nov. 1995; 13th Volunteer Regional Convention; Memphis; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; VRC-13, PO Box 242135, Memphis, TN 38111

**Texas:** 6-8 Oct.; Best Little Regional Convention; Abilene; info: (915) 368-5663; 1957 Vogel, Abilene, TX 79603

**Washington:** 22-24 Sept.; 11th Spiritual Connection; Cornet Bay, Oak Harbor; info: (360) 428-7171; Convention, Box 1001, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

**Wisconsin:** 4-6 Aug.; Kettle Moraine Area Unity Jam Campout; Camp Y-Koda, Sheboygan; info: (414) 458-7078; Box 1022, Sheboygan, WI 53082

**2)** 1-4 Sept.; Campvention 95; Clearwater Camp, Minocqua; info: (715) 277-4141; Box 383, Minocqua, WI 54548

**3)** 27-29 Oct.; Wisconsin State Convention; Wisconsin Dells; rsvns: (800) 388-4782 or (608) 254-8366; info: (608) 788-0447; WSNAC, Box 652, Sauk City, WI 53583

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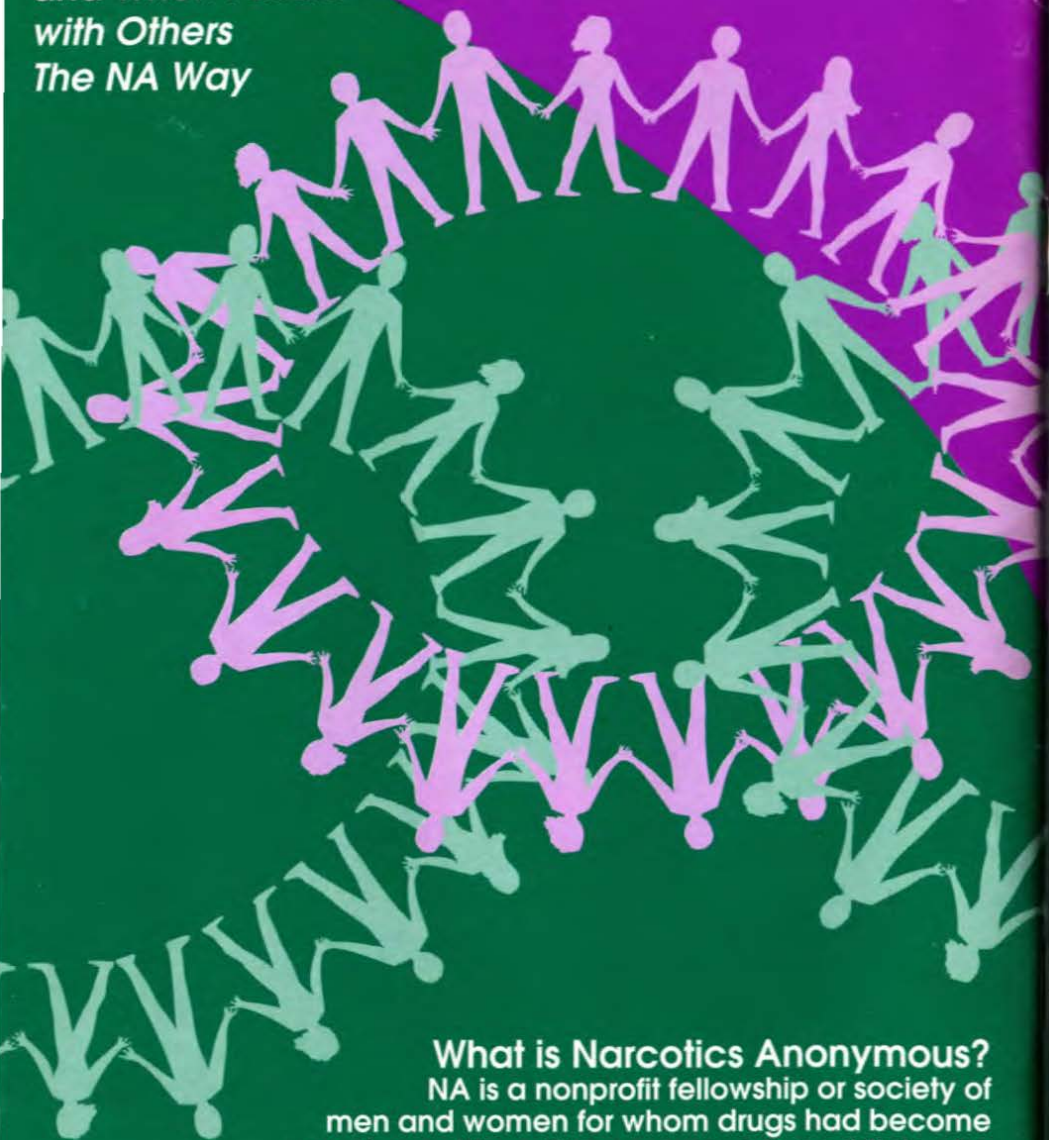
## The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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*My Gratitude Speaks...  
When I Care  
and When I Share  
with Others  
The NA Way*



### **What is Narcotics Anonymous?**

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.

There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.