

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

THE NA Way MAGAZINE[®]

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.



The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

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From the editor



Update: World Service Conference says to keep publishing *The NA Way*

The annual meeting of our fellowship's World Service Conference was held the last week of May in Greensboro, North Carolina. At that meeting, representatives discussed the situation with *The NA Way*, asked questions of the World Service Office Board of Directors, and then expressed through a straw poll that they would like to see the office continue producing the magazine for at least another year.

Conference participants suggested a variety of approaches for dealing with the magazine. One motion suggested lowering the quality (paper, graphics) and raising the price. Another offered specific suggestions for marketing the magazine and raising the price. Still another called for continuing the magazine as it is at any cost. All of these motions were referred to the WSO board for consideration during the coming year.

Some of the concerns expressed at WSC made it apparent that our reporting about the magazine hasn't always been comprehensive. One, there was a perception that we haven't tried to market the magazine. Two, there was a perception that we could lower our production costs sig-

nificantly by using less expensive paper, dropping art, etc.

Our efforts to market *The NA Way* have been comprehensive, but at the same time, we have to be careful to stay well within the spirit of NA's guiding principles. For instance, many of our members might find it offensive if we targeted our member database to receive "direct-mail" type advertisements for the magazine. Instead, we've tried an annual group subscription drive, which involves sending sign-up sheets to each group through its ASC. Unfortunately, we run into the same problem with this as we always do when we try to communicate with the groups: we're only reaching those that have registered and provided contact information. Nevertheless, we will be trying again.

We also send sample magazines, posters, and sign-up sheets to any convention or other NA event at which someone is willing to set up a display and return sign-up sheets. Several years ago, we tried the NA Way "networker" program, which was a way for individual members to be advocates for the magazine, generating both articles and subscriptions. Unfortunately, the returns from this program were never what we expected and the costs were prohibitive—i.e., the networker program's

annual expenses were ten times that of the group drive, but new subscriptions generated were less than ten percent of those resulting from the group drive.

We have investigated ways of cutting the costs associated with the magazine all along. Some we have implemented, such as reducing the human resources devoted to the magazine, dropping the paper quality, and streamlining procedures. Still, we have no control over some costs, such as postage, and though we could probably save a small amount by eliminating art and changing the cover, the overall cost wouldn't be dramatically affected.

The board's concern about the magazine, which resulted in its recommendation to cease publication, has never been solely about money. The expense is an issue because the WSO board considers itself the steward of NA resources, both financial and human, at the World Service Office. However, any service the fellowship finds essential to its growth and development is going to be a priority for the WSO board, and financial and human resources will be devoted to providing that service. The board had begun to question the necessity of *The NA Way Magazine* as a service because of its dwindling subscriber base.

At this writing, the magazine has about 4,800 subscribers. That's less than one subscriber for every four registered meetings. Even more disheartening is that when the board first notified the fellowship of its desire to stop publication, there were 5,500 subscribers. We're not sure if

the drop in subscribers is because some expected the magazine to fold and so didn't renew their subscriptions or if it's part of the same overall trend of the past several years. Either way, it's not encouraging for the life of the magazine.

The board and editorial staff will be reporting regularly about the status of the magazine—subscriber rates, marketing efforts, etc.—both in the magazine and in other periodicals, the *Newsline*, and the *Conference Report* and *Conference Digest*. If the subscriber base remains low, we may just wind up back in the same spot we were in at this year's WSC.

The board does recognize that any decision to stop publication of the magazine would require conference approval. Therefore, it would present a motion in the *Conference Agenda Report* if it felt the magazine should cease publication. That way, the fellowship would have ample opportunity to discuss the issues surrounding *The NA Way Magazine* and express its group conscience through its regional service representatives at the next World Service Conference.

The WSO board is committed to serving the fellowship. If our fellowship wants a magazine, it will need to express its desire for one by supporting the magazine—that is, by subscribing.

I am challenging each subscriber to sign up five more subscribers. If you want sign-up sheets mailed to you, contact me. I'm here to help.

CT, Editor

Run for freedom

As a forty-two-year-old addict with an extremely long criminal record, my favorite justification for my sorry condition was to blame it on the terrible injustice of the judicial system. They had never given me a break, I claimed. I had always been sentenced to prison, never to a treatment program. I painted myself as a poor junkie who had never had the opportunity of being educated in the ways of this disease and recovery from it. And I certainly couldn't afford the thousands of dollars it would require to enter a quality program on my own.

The truth is, however, that over the years various judges and parole and probation officers did send or take me to programs, but I would never stay longer than a day or two. Usually, I'd wait for the PO to finish talking to the staff, wish me luck, and drive off. Then I would be out the door and on the street in a flash—before my PO even got back to his office. Given any chance to run, I'd always take it.

But today I've been clean for twenty-four months. I'm in my fourteenth month in a residential treatment center, and I'm a very grateful member of Narcotics Anonymous.

Running had become such a fundamental part of my character that the only way I could ever come to understand the disease of addiction and hear NA's life-saving message of hope was to find myself in this program from which I cannot run, a program within a prison. Oh, there were NA meetings in other places where I've done time, and I occasionally attended, but I simply hadn't been "broken" enough to accept it.

By the time I got here, I was too weary to keep on running. I felt like a wild animal that had been chased down to its last bit of energy and finally cornered. I'd been running my entire life. I ran away from home as a kid. I ran away from police, relationships, responsibilities, and anyone who dared to try to help me. Mostly, I ran from myself. I was the hunter and I was the prey.

I even came to this fellowship in a characteristic way. I came running away from something. I came to escape the monster my addiction had become because I couldn't take it anymore. But while I was here, I listened. I listened, and hope took root and grew in my heart. Finally, I surrendered to this simple spiritual program.

I still have to smile at that misleading way we have of describing our program: simple. Yes, it is indeed simple, but certainly not always easy. I quickly learned that in order for the program to work for me, I had to make an honest attempt at doing what the steps suggested. The Twelve Steps didn't sound too tough when I first read over them from a comfortable distance. Admitting, believing, de-

ciding, a little introspection, some healthy confession, and so on—nothing to it, right?

Wrong.

When I finally began to actually do what the steps were suggesting, I discovered that I needed to have certain attributes that I had trouble laying my hands on—things like honesty, courage, faith, and trust. Not exactly qualities with which junkies fresh off the street are endowed. I vaguely recognized that the steps represented some sort of doorway to spirituality, but spirituality was a foreign place that I knew nothing about. Being honest with myself and others was uncomfortable, even painful, but that was obviously the key. More than once I've been consumed with my old familiar impulse to flee and forget the whole thing. Ah, yes, but where would I run to? I'm in prison. And this program was designed for addicts who, like me, are part rabbit; although we enter voluntarily, we're not permitted to just check out and return to the main population whenever the pressure is turned up. The coordinator, a recovering addict himself, is not inclined to let us continue to run from our problems, so once we're accepted for admission, we're here for the duration.

And so I began to face life on life's terms, struggling with each step and working at change. To my utter amazement, I found that each time I faced a step head-on and simply did what it suggested, it resulted in a boost to my self-esteem, a lessening of my fears, and a deepening of my newfound serenity. I learned that I could deal with all of life's conflicts

and responsibilities in the same way, with honesty and courage. Recently, I finished a long and extremely emotional Fifth Step with the prison chaplain and am now wrestling with how to become entirely ready to have the God of my understanding remove my character defects.

I came to Narcotics Anonymous running from myself and life. I had nowhere else to go. I had run out of other places to run. Since coming here, I have been introduced to me; we're becoming friends.

Members of our fellowship have heard NA's message in myriad ways. This is just the way it had to happen for me. I had to come to prison to finally find freedom.

Anonymous



Enjoying the process

My name is Martin. I am a recovering addict.

At the height of my active addiction, I was using over \$1000 a day. I looked around one evening and saw that I had become everything I despised. I had blown off my career, my wife, my children, and a lot of money. I was out of money, out of hope, and out of dope. The only way out that I could see was suicide. That failed and I was angry at God because I couldn't even end the pain of living by dying. That was 3 February 1992. Today I am making meetings, staying clean, and really enjoying this wonderful process we call recovery, this process of living life one day at a time.

I begin each day by thanking my Higher Power that He loves me enough to give me the gift of another day of life. I ask Him to help me stay clean and protect me from the desire to act out on my disease. Like a child who has received a "grown-up" gift, I acknowledge that I don't know how to manage or use this day He has given me. I ask Him to show me how to use it. Then I simply report for duty, asking the Boss what His will is for me today and asking for the tools to carry out His wishes. I take a morning cup

of coffee, read my *Just for Today* meditation book, and sit quietly and listen to His instructions. Sometimes I take notes in the form of a to-do list. Then I get busy doing the things that have been placed before me to do.

My life has its ups and downs and its everyday problems, but I am no longer afraid of life because I have truly come to believe that there is a Higher Power taking care of me.

From time to time, I still find myself thinking about drugs: the buzz, the using times. That used to scare me. But it doesn't anymore. Early in my recovery, I thought there was something wrong with a recovering addict having the urge to pick up or fantasizing about drugs. I was afraid of my thoughts and afraid I'd use. Now I accept the thoughts as a natural part of my disease. I have learned that just because the beast of addiction talks to me, I don't have to listen to it. Just because the thought comes to my mind, I do not have to invite it in, spend time with it, and "entertain" it. All I really have to do is refuse to listen to that voice in my head, or think it all the way through. If I pick up, what will really happen? Usually, the thought of using vanishes after a minute or so. Sometimes I have to do something more to quiet the beast, like call another recovering addict, go to a meeting, read the Basic Text, or read *The NA Way Magazine*.

I have been experiencing joy and serenity now for an extended period of time. The one problem I have is that I'm happy. The only thing right now that is detracting from my serenity is that this voice in my head tells me I must be overlooking something.

I can't really be this happy. I must be in big-time denial—about something. My inventories have not produced anything. My sponsor laughed and laughed when I shared this "problem," and told me to relax and enjoy the process.

I remember feeling, about a year ago, that I didn't fit in with NA. I would go to meetings and a lot of people would share about how grateful they were for the gift of recovery and how glad they were to be there. I didn't feel that way. Meetings that were once new and exciting had become boring and monotonous. Meetings were not something I liked to do; they were something I had to do to stay clean. Life seemed either boring or scary.

I concluded that other people were lying when they said how happy they were. Either that, or I was just different from them. So I shared this at a meeting, and though I was angry and hostile in my pain, those people understood. They not only said to keep coming back, but pointed out that my meeting attendance had dropped con-

siderably and suggested that I restore it and become more active in the fellowship and in service.

Following their suggestions, I increased my meeting attendance to a minimum of four a week, got involved in chairing meetings, and took on a trusted servant's position in my home group. I became active in sponsoring others and sharing my experience, strength, and hope with people in treatment centers once a month. Now I'm the one who is always saying how happy I am—and I really am. I found out that it is not only true that I cannot keep what I have unless I give it away, but also that what I have gets better when I share it.

Sometimes my disease talks to me. I think, am I the only one with this experience? Is my bubble going to burst? Then what? Maybe it will tomorrow. I don't know. But just for today, it feels good so I am going to enjoy it and leave tomorrow in the hands of my Higher Power. I'm going to keep doing what I did so that I can keep getting what I got and enjoy the process.

My Higher Power, the people he has put in my life, the Fellowship of NA, working the steps, and trying to apply the principles in all my affairs to the best of my ability have transformed my life. I am grateful.

MH, Michigan



Serving the fellowship

Before coming to Narcotics Anonymous, we were subject to the cruel dictates of addiction. Service consisted of submitting to the task of getting and using drugs. We obeyed without question a merciless tyrant that robbed us of our spirits, families, and welfare. All we had left was the agonizing knowledge of the harm we had caused ourselves and others. Tormented by that knowledge, we experienced feelings of guilt, shame, and worthlessness. Many times we tried to stop using, only to sink deeper and deeper into despair and self-pity when we failed. The results of our toil were loss of freedom and health and, all too often, death.

Out of desperation, we came to NA needing deliverance from the pain and suffering. Mentally and physically exhausted, we realized we were unable to sever the chains of addiction without help. When we heard the life-giving message of recovery and saw that others had broken free, we gained the faith to believe we could also. Willing to try anything, we made a decision to surrender to the hope set before us.

From the fellowship, we received genuine love and understanding. As we listened to others talk about their experience with drug addiction, similar problems and feelings emerged. Realizing we had much in common with the group, we became members of the fellowship. By accepting spiritual principles and working the steps of the program, we learned that we had assets, not just liabilities. As we accepted ourselves and others, we received joy and contentment that we had not found anywhere else.

Reaping the benefits of the program leads us to ask this question: How can I show my gratitude? By the example of fellow members, we learn that we keep what we have by giving it away. Unsure of how to show our appreciation for this gift of life, we start by asking for help. Having received our recovery from the God of our understanding, we make ourselves available as His instrument. Through prayer and meditation, we ask for knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out. Accepting guidance may seem difficult at first, but with willingness and an open mind, this becomes easier.

We begin our service by understanding the primary purpose of the fellowship: staying clean and carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. Sharing with other addicts is a vital tool of the program; only one addict can truly understand another. Even a member with one day in the fellowship can carry the message that the program works.

Identifying the components of service allows us to choose ways to serve according to our own comfort level.

We start by providing the basic needs that keep the program functioning. We do this by sharing financially or of our time. We keep our meeting places clean, in good repair, and fit for use. We can help prepare for our meetings. For example, one person's talent may be making a good pot of coffee. To see the value in this, just attend a meeting where the coffee didn't turn out well. We serve by welcoming members and newcomers, and by passing out literature, phone numbers, and locations of area meetings. We can share in decision-making within our group conscience and help carry out its various functions.

Some members can provide a written message of recovery to the area newsletter or other NA publications. This may consist of a story, poetry, or humor. Sharing our clean-time birthdays is a quick and powerful message that the program works. We can report information on group activities and projects. Artwork is also a good medium for self-expression. All of these are excellent avenues for carrying the message.

Some members give of their time to service boards and committees, from area to world levels.

Those who are too shy to serve formally can simply make themselves visible. The power of example speaks loudly. It's a great comfort just knowing that others are standing by.

One area where we all contribute is by supporting each other's service in the fellowship.

Even though we try to approach this new way of life with our best efforts, we are still imperfect human beings. Occasionally character de-

fects surface and problems occur. Narcotics Anonymous is a God-given program and we maintain our group dignity only with love and our group conscience. Practicing true spiritual principles in our daily affairs brings unity. If we could have succeeded by our own will, our lives would not have become so unmanageable. By applying the traditions and concepts of the program, we never have to worry if we are right or wrong. We understand that we have been given our own unique qualities to share; nevertheless, we remain equal, simply addicts helping other addicts. We lose our effectiveness when our motives aren't based on selfless service.

*...we have been
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nevertheless, we
remain equal,...*

By serving the fellowship, we see our usefulness. Our self-esteem is raised and we feel good about ourselves. We start to feel that we are making amends that couldn't be made directly, and personal conflicts in this area begin to be resolved. By giving and receiving help, we stay clean and carry the joyous message of recovery. Life is then no longer a task to be endured, but a labor of love.

RM, Kansas

Learning and listening

The slogan, "learn to listen and listen to learn," is probably the most important one in my recovery. I try to incorporate this slogan into my daily affairs. I've realized that I need to be willing to listen to everyone I come into contact with.

Due to the gifts of this program, I've been clean for three years and four months. My perceptions have changed. Very often, it seems like everything is new, like I'm hearing everything for the first time. I know I'm truly listening when I feel a sense of wonder in the process.

To effectively listen, this is what I must do: First, I need to stop grinding my teeth. I have a bad habit of doing that when I'm taking in new information. Next, I must relax my facial muscles and allow my emotions to come and go spontaneously. Sometimes I smile in agreement automatically as I listen to another person because I want them to like me even if I don't agree with what they're saying. Next, I must try to empty my own thoughts. This is a lot like meditation and it makes sense, considering that when I meditate I'm listening to my higher power, and when I'm listening to another person, I'm listening to my higher power through that person. By practicing the principle of open-mindedness, I've learned some very valuable things in some very unlikely places. Today, I know what's nonsense and what may be useful information so I can take what I need and leave the rest behind. It's amazing how a few words can mean so much as I proceed on my journey of recovery.

LF, New York



Surrender and acceptance leading to freedom

I was a drug dealer. I am an addict also. Big surprise! But I was one of those dealers that started out for, and continued for, the money. Money can be a big motivator and addiction in itself. Money, combined with that chaotic, dangerous lifestyle of active addiction was as seductive to me as the drugs ever could be, and as hard to put down.

My problem is that I never got caught. I hit a very devastating bottom, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. I surrendered to the drugs. They won. I lost. I got help. I became willing and started working a program. I got a sponsor, started praying, and went to a lot of meetings. I kept selling dope.

After a few months of this, I thought I was losing my mind. I had gotten a conscience and a conscious contact with my Higher Power. I couldn't reap the benefits of the pro-

gram because my existence was still based on a bedrock of lies and deception.

However, I was beginning to get honest with myself. The next step was to get honest in a meeting. So I did. That was a year ago. I thought lightning would strike me. I thought I would be shunned. I felt an overwhelming sense of relief—and fear. But the pain of the situation was greater than the fear. I got feedback. You bet I did.

I stopped dealing, but now my problem is different. I have a clever, scheming mind and have always conned, manipulated, and run scams to make money. Now the principles of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness are foremost in my program. I'm angry. I don't want to have to work for next to nothing, for many hours, starting at the bottom, just to live. I've been spoiled rotten and

don't want to live life on life's terms. I like having the freedom to cruise around and go to meetings, do service work, hit the gym, spend lots of time with other recovering addicts. I'm very jealous of my time, and unwilling and afraid to move on.

I'm afraid that I won't make it on life's terms. I'm afraid of being inadequate. I hate myself for these feelings. I believe they are inappropriate and petty. I am very ashamed to be like this and have been beating myself up daily.

Then, in the middle of all this emotional chaos, I noticed something in our literature. It says that change

comes through self-awareness, surrender, and growth. Somehow I had missed the concepts of surrender and acceptance. I have to surrender to my feelings, appropriate or not. I have to accept myself the way I am. I have to forget about being ashamed because I am not the way I think I should be.

Something has happened in the past week. Surrendering has unlocked a door within me. With self-acceptance comes choices. With choice comes freedom. Life is an opportunity. It's time to walk through my fears and ask for help. I can't do this alone.

PL, Maryland



Thanks for making it work

I've been clean for four years, and I've been incarcerated for five. Not too hard to figure out what that means, huh?

I learned how to live clean in one of the rooms that was available in one of the facilities I was in years ago. One of the "civilians" who helped me run the meetings there is presently my sponsor. He has helped me grow and learn the lessons I almost thought were beyond me. He has helped me see things that on my own I would have missed. I am very grateful to him.

Today, I am also grateful to be a recovering addict, who is still in the grip of "the house of the dead," or prison, if you'd prefer. It's given me the chance to learn the lessons that I have to practice each day, and maybe even be an example to one of our brothers that surround me here, still lost in the places I came from: drugs, obsessive/compulsive behavior, and active addiction. These are all prevalent here, so much so it might shock you. This is why I'm grateful today. Maybe I can make a difference in

somebody's life, the way somebody made a difference in mine.

I came to jail with a ton of character defects. I've even managed to hold on to a few until recently. Recovery is an ongoing process, one I'll be engaged in for the rest of my life, and one I'll never tire of. Today I'm a recovering addict. Even though I still have friends in the street that sometimes can't be there when I need them most, like when I'd kill for a hug, it's okay. I'll always have myself and my HP to hug.

I've come a very long way since being here, but someday I'll walk out, more free and alive than I had ever dreamed was actually possible.

Thanks to each and every one of you in the rooms, *The NA Way Magazine*, and the program. It works for me because I had you there to help when I couldn't get it to work by myself. I promise that I'll be there for the next person, too. We're all in this together, and that's what makes it work.

JP, New York

A silent recovery

Hello. I am Augie, and I am an addict. I have more than five years clean, yet I have been struggling to survive. I tried to do something different and it came out disastrous. I feel as if I've been left with nothing. As of today, I do not know what the hell is going on. I am still going to NA meetings, and doing that has never been easy for me. It has nothing to do with denial or resentment. If it were not for NA, I would have been dead a long time ago. I am not blaming NA. I would do stupid things without the NA principles that I have tried to apply in all my affairs. Recovery works. The only problem is that I don't know what I'm supposed to do or what is right for me.

Going to NA meetings is for me like going to another country without knowing the language or culture. It has been hard on my recovery. However, I have trusted that something marvelous would happen. Many people are puzzled by why it has been so hard on me. Well, the answer is simple: I am deaf. My primary language is American Sign Language. I rely on my interpreter for any meeting hosted by hearing people.

I was living in New York state, and there were a few regular meetings for the deaf (paid for by people who are graciously willing to pay for the regular services of an interpreter). There are currently about twelve deaf people I know who are serious about their recovery, and have long-term recovery. I consider them my best friends, even family.

I took a five-month job in North Carolina. I wish I hadn't taken this job. It feels like I exchanged it for recovery. I am having a really hard time getting out of this mess. The worst part is that I am alone down here in North Carolina. There aren't any other deaf people or ASL meetings down here. Being alone has had a negative effect on my recovery. I wanted to share something about this. I have learned that it is more important to keep a true bond with people in recovery. Exchanging them for employment, a better climate, etc., could be a fatal mistake. I realize that I have made a major mistake.

It is important for me to be with people with whom I can relate and with whom I can share. I know that my best chance of remaining sane lies in me getting home as soon as possible, back to my home group.

AT, North Carolina

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FUNDING
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HOSPITALS AND
INSTITUTIONS
LEADERSHIP
LITERATURE
LOVING GOD
MAJORITY
MOTION
OUTREACH
PHONELINES
POLICY
PRIMARY PURPOSE

PUBLIC INFORMATION
REDRESS
REGIONAL SERVICE
COMMITTEE
REPORT
RESOLUTION
RSR
SECRETARY
SELFLESS
STRUCTURE
TREASURER
TRUSTEES
VOTING
WORLD SERVICE
CONFERENCE

Home Group



Newsletters



I told a lie the other day!

From *The Recoverer*, the Washington/North Idaho regional newsletter:

I told a lie and it did not feel good or right, yet at the time I rationalized that it was and I told it anyway.

And I got caught.

It was not a big lie. It was one of those "little" lies you tell when you are trying to spare someone's feelings. It was like the lies you tell when you believe the actual truth will sound a lot worse or hurtful. My grandmother called them "white lies," but there was nothing white or clear or brilliant about this one. Even with the seemingly constructive reasons I gave myself to tell it, this little lie felt big and dark and ominous.

I was wrong to do it and now, because I was caught in the lie, I have

actually created a breach in a relationship. A friendship that, until now, had been based on love and honesty. I feel sad and wrong and the apologies I sputtered and the vow not to do it again did not seem to suffice. An underlying haze of distrust and betrayal seems to remain in even our most lighthearted conversations. And the bottom line is that even in recovery I can create great wreckage.

Since my first meeting I have always heard the people in the rooms speak about being honest. Honesty is talked about in the readings we do before each meeting. I have witnessed the miracle that happens when someone gets honest. Honesty is one of the three things required for getting recovery in NA. It is mentioned perpetually in our Basic Text, and it is absolutely required of me in any step work that I do. I have to wonder, why did I chose not to apply something that I am so fully aware of in a social situation?

Perhaps it was because, at the time, I felt it to be the easier, softer way. In retrospect, I see that it was not and if the lie would have worked and replaced the truth, I would not have gotten the gift of the realization that even "white" lying is not something that I want to do today. The act of lying does not say anything about the person I want to be today.

Doing it did not feel good and getting honest after the fact required a great deal more energy than being honest would have in the first place. And, too, I have hurt someone dear to me. In the other person's place, I would feel equally dishonored and disheartened. Yes, I have learned a valuable lesson, but at the expense of the feelings of a person I care very deeply about.

In time, I hope that the person I hurt will forgive me and trust me again. I know that I must be responsible to make amends when I have hurt someone, but it is not my affair, nor do I have any control over what happens as a result of the amends. That part is out of my hands and in God's. It is only through God's grace that I will be forgiven and be restored to the place I once was in: that of a trustworthy friend. All the "should haves" don't matter now. Again, I learned in recovery through pain. Through the experience of other addicts, I am told that as we move down the path of recovery, fewer and fewer of life's lessons are dealt through pain and that we can instead learn life's lessons through joy.

I look forward to that place. I am once again hopeful that someday I will—more often than not—be the person I aspire to be, practicing these principles in *all* my affairs.

Vicaroo

My lying head

From *The Inside Connection*, the American River area newsletter, North Highlands, California:

Finding out that my head spent many years telling me lies was quite a revelation. You'd think the "voice" who identified itself as "me" would be a source of truth, reliable enough to follow. Unfortunately, after taking a long look at the wreckage this voice directed me into, I had to acknowledge that my "truth" was often self-serving and destructive.

Denial isn't a lie I tell *you*; rather, it's a lie I tell *me*. If I end up lying to you, hey, it's a secondhand lie! I found out that some of the things I lied about many years ago were known to me as lies when they crossed my lips. However, after the telling and retelling of these very same lies, I became confused as to details of truth and lies, and soon after, completely lost track of the truth. The result of this self-deception was that I finally resigned myself to believing things I'd originally created!

I found this fascinating and troubling at the same time. What I was looking at seemed to be an impossible phenomenon. How can someone in-

vent some "cock and bull" story one day, and somewhere down the road have a perfect memory of an event which never happened? Sounded like some twisted "Twilight Zone" episode! But this was real. It was far too real. . . .

Some of the stories my head whispered to me were in the form of making me out to be either a hero or a victim, depending on the circumstances, of some real event. For example, in the area of relationships, I was never quite able to see my part in breaking up. You see, there was a great need to hide myself, my role, in the death of these relationships, because if I didn't it would mean that I must have been somehow at fault for their failure. For me to be a hero meant you treated a great man like trash, and therefore didn't deserve to share my shadow.

For me to be a victim, I had to be some sort of hard-working, average Joe whom you'd stomped unmercifully into the mud. Either one of these scenarios allowed me to continue to get loaded guilt-free!

To get loaded: that's what this was all about anyway, right? I hung out with a lot of different people during my using, but the focus of my being was keeping the "head" loaded. I met many of the people who passed through my life over a bag of dope. I think that, early on, these meetings were a significant statement of where the relationships were headed. Later in life, my addiction said the bag of dope belonged to me, and if I met you, then you better have your own bag with enough in it for me! Still later, I was only interested in your bag and

my ability to get it from you. Some hero, huh? Some victim.

The progression of the lies I was able to tell myself ran strangely along the same trail as my downward spiral into the oblivion of addiction. It was one of the hardest things I had to face when I came into recovery: the truth.

What I have to watch out for today is the indication that I'm allowing my head too much time with itself. I need other people—my sponsor, addicts in meetings, and the quiet urging of my Higher Power—to get inside my head and talk with my denial. Without using the resources offered in the program of Narcotics Anonymous, I'm setting myself up to be influenced by the same old stories that got me loaded, kept me loaded, and potentially could do it all again—one more time.

I'm now waking up without having to be a slave to my head. I believe that being an addict means I'll wake up each and every morning with *some* kind of need. This morning my need was not a pursuit of the bag; it was the need to find out what my Higher Power wants me to do. In this relationship I'm neither hero nor victim. I've come to a place where I'm simply a servant, and the difference between being a servant and a slave is choice. Drugs offered no choice; my Higher Power does.

Anonymous

Finding out what real caring means

**From *What's Happening*,
the Winnipeg, Manitoba, area
newsletter:**

Just as the Twelfth Step is the accumulated result of applying the spiritual principles of all the previous steps, the "thirteenth step" is the accumulated denial and consequence of not applying these spiritual principles to my daily affairs, to my own needs, and to my relations with women.

At one time, I thought thirteenth-stepping meant only having sex with a newcomer. From my own personal experience and from having reviewed my own personal behavior, thirteenth-stepping involves a great deal more. Today, I must honestly apply the spiritual principles of honesty, openmindedness, and willingness concerning my intentions and motives when interacting with women in the fellowship.

When I first came to NA, I was very fortunate. The women were either too smart or too young. As much as I wanted a relationship (someone to make me feel better), I was afraid the

smart ones would see right through me and call me on my underlying motives. I was also afraid they would be protective of the younger women and confront me about my intentions and motives when interacting with women in the fellowship. I was not at a place in my recovery where I could handle confrontation so I stayed away from all women in the program.

I have used the principle of honesty as a form of manipulation while sharing in meetings, hoping a particular woman would be so impressed that she would fall madly in love with me and accept me as her higher power. Other times I hoped that my honesty would entice some cute codependent to offer her comfort and support to see me through a certain painful period of my recovery. That is thirteenth-stepping.

I would go out for coffee after meetings and beam in on a woman who seemed to be struggling. I would offer understanding and support in an attempt to convince her what a nice guy I was. I could sit there spouting all this wonderful spirituality and be fantasizing about her taking me home

to live a wonderful, bliss-filled life together. I was not honest about my intentions. That is thirteenth-stepping.

At about five years clean, I began to recognize and accept that I was being dishonest and disrespectful toward myself and the other person. I made a vow to myself that I would not get involved with any woman who had less than a year clean. This meant not even going out for coffee after meetings unless there was another person present. I didn't trust myself, my motives, or my intentions.

This vow lasted about a year and a half. I fell in love with a woman who had seven months clean. I asked all the right questions. Are you just hanging onto me like a lifeboat in your recovery? Silly me. How could I expect someone with seven months to even know if that was true for her or not? My own denial, loneliness, and dishonesty deluded me into believing that I was in a place in my recovery where I was ready and able to be responsible and mature enough to deal with a relationship. It lasted three months. It took me that long to get

honest with myself. Although I believed I had grown to love this person, I had only fallen into lust. Even when I think I'm doing my best recovery, and believe my intentions are good and honorable, I can still be conning myself though I'm not aware of it consciously. That is thirteenth-stepping.

I have also listened, offering my support and understanding, to a woman as she struggled and talked about her personal abuse issues. All the while, I sat there thinking I just wanted to get her into bed. That dishonesty, sick behavior, and my underlying motives and intentions were all elements of the thirteenth step.

During my using, when I was in a relationship, my partner was a secondary responsibility. My primary responsibility was my love for drugs. The person I was with was nothing more than a novelty for my use when the drugs wore off or something to make me feel better when the drugs no longer worked.

My purpose in coming to NA wasn't to find a relationship. Getting clean doesn't automatically qualify me as someone who is ready for a re-



lationship. Being friends with women feels good, but I can still use it as a substitute for drugs, something to fill my own selfish needs. Whenever I allow my own will, loneliness, or desperation to influence my relations with women, I am using them instead of working my program. That is thirteenth-stepping.

When I see people with less than three or four years getting involved in a relationship, I'm reminded of where I was at in that phase of my recovery. I didn't have a clue about who I was, what I wanted, or what God's will for me was. I certainly wasn't mature enough to accept and deal with another human being and all her personal issues and problems.

Today, I stay away from women because I don't want to set them up for some kind of delusion or fantasy that would only distract and deter them from the real issues we must all face in order to recover. I've seen guys swarm all over a woman who shared that she was in pain the minute the meeting ended. I've seen both men and women newcomers change partners every few weeks. One week they walk into a meeting hand-in-hand; the next week one is gone. That is thirteenth-stepping.

Today, I stay away and let the women in the fellowship work with the new women. I may be able to maintain my integrity and my intentions may be honorable, but I have no way of knowing what's going on in the woman's mind, what kind of conclusions she's drawing from my caring. Any time I put myself in the path of a woman's recovery process, I am thirteenth-stepping. I don't associate

(one-on-one) with women in early recovery. If I did, it would be thirteenth-stepping.

From my personal experience, I view thirteenth-stepping as much more than just sexually exploiting a newcomer. It is anything I do that results in a woman not working her recovery process. It is anything I do that prevents a woman from developing a relationship with a woman sponsor. It is anything I do that gets in the way of allowing a woman to experience and benefit from the NA program. I have to do a Fourth and Fifth Step on my relations with women both in the program and before I came to NA. I am not proud of my past actions, but today I have the opportunity to make amends by taking full responsibility for my relationships with women. I no longer have to con, scam, or manipulate my way into the life, heart, or bed of a woman just to raise my own low self-esteem or to satisfy my own self-centered, self-seeking, self-willed motives and intentions. Give yourself a break and get a life of your own before you attach yourself to anyone else's.

Thank you, Narcotics Anonymous, for loving me and accepting me in spite of all my sick thinking and negative behavior as I come to understand myself, my world, and my responsibility toward other human beings.

*A grateful addict and recovering
thirteenth-stepper
RR, Manitoba*

Viewpoint



Are you clean if you smoke?



Recently, I heard someone accuse our trusted servants of not dealing with whether or not using nicotine constituted a relapse in NA because they feared "political repercussions." There are other good reasons for opposing the view that using nicotine means one has relapsed. My own reason (as a non-smoker who allows no smoking in the house or car and who attends all non-smoking meetings) has nothing to do with political repercussions.

I believe that once we remove drugs from the picture, we are left with the disease of addiction to be treated through meetings, sponsorship, and the steps. This is a long process. Throughout the process there are numerous ways the disease seems to thrive. Very notable ways

are sex addictions, food addictions, gambling, smoking, even excessive coffee drinking. Sexual addiction, it could be argued, is in some sense a form of drug addiction, because the addict compulsively pursues behaviors that release chemical substances that are mind- and mood-altering. Smoking is clearly a behavior that involves ingesting a drug addictively.

The problem, though, is that as soon as we start to use these arguments to muddy the water of what constitutes total abstinence (admittedly already a bit gray), we've taken a step on a slippery slope that will make it virtually impossible for anyone to have any clean time. We will have taken a perfectly useful and readily definable concept—total abstinence as we understand it right

now—and rendered it so hazy as to be useless.

Our experience as a fellowship suggests that when we abstain from drugs, i.e., pot, alcohol, Valium, cocaine, heroin—common sense will help anyone complete this list—and pursue the lifestyle of recovery, we open the door to systematically addressing all the other ways our addiction seeks to thrive. That list includes sexual compulsions, nicotine use, gambling, addictive relationships, etc. There are many things that alter the mood or suppress feelings. My question to those who would change our current understanding of total abstinence is this: Why even go down that path when we have a program that works beautifully as it is?

RH, New Mexico

The forgotten tradition

Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions—Tradition Seven

NA saved my life. I share and care the NA way, yet I am unwilling to support the meetings that saved my life because:

- I don't approve of the way the group is spending the money.
- The treasurer doesn't seem honest.
- My dollar doesn't count.
- Many more flimsy excuses.

While we are talking about it, what's with this dollar, anyway? Ten years ago addicts were throwing a dollar in the basket. Ten years ago a dollar went a lot further than it does today. NA needs our support! What would happen if NA folded because of lack of financial support? We would all perish and die. But that won't happen, will it? Will it?

I attended an anniversary meeting with forty-nine people present. Twenty dollars was thrown in the basket by those in attendance. Assuming each person threw in a dollar, what happened to the other twenty-nine people? Keep in mind, there are probably people who throw in more than a buck. What do you think this means?

I am glad to support NA, but when you choose to create excuses as to why you won't honor this tradition, I feel used. Very few of us can't afford to follow this tradition. Then why aren't we?

Years before I made NA my sole source of recovery, I heard a suggestion in the "other fellowship" that the price of a drink should go into the basket! It makes me laugh! NA would be rich if we put the cost of a fix in the basket! And don't give me that line that you never paid for your drugs. Brother, sister, you paid dearly in one way or another.

The change you receive from your purchase of coffee, cigarettes, soda, etc., may not seem like much, but every nickel or dime goes a long way to saving/supporting your recovery.

How "your change" is spent:

The group pays rent, buys coffee, buys literature to be given away, books for sale (often way below cost), chips or keytags (lots of white chips), medallions for anniversaries, and other things.

The group also contributes to the area.

The area pays rent for a meeting place, the phoneline (includes beeper and phone bill), activities (these are limited due to a lack of funds to support them), hospitals and institutions (literature to the meetings), public information, secretary's expenses (photocopying, postage, etc.), and the area newsletter.

The area then makes a contribution to the region. The region has expenses much like the area's.

The region filters whatever is left to world services to carry the message globally.

There was a motion in our area some months ago that we prioritize our area expenses. This motion was made because at times our area does not have enough money to meet all of our expenses.

This motion would never have had to be presented if each and every addict who honestly could, *would* support NA.

Suggested ways of contributing to
NA:

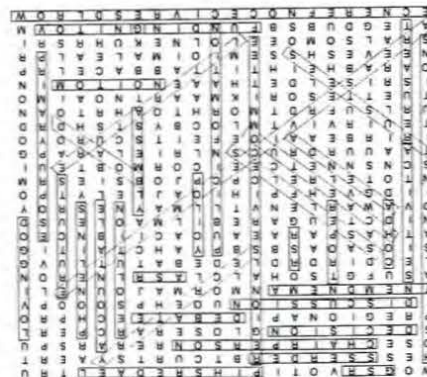
1. Area you a smoker? Cut back on your cigarettes, add years to

your life, and put money in the basket!

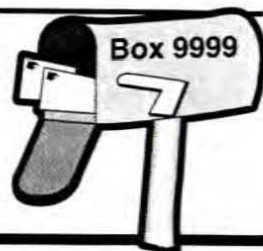
2. Have you substituted chocolate or candy for drugs? Throw away that candy habit and lose inches while NA gains financial support!
3. Are you a concert junkie? Buy a CD, save yourself the aggravation of parking, the temptation of being in a drug-infested place, wear and tear on your eardrums, and loss of serenity. Throw the difference in the basket. Ronnie Rocker won't miss you.
4. Like your gourmet coffee? Drink our rotgut instead. Its taste will improve when complemented with the good feeling you get from supporting your fellowship.

Our meetings need your financial support. We are NA. Are we self-supporting? Are you observing the Seventh Tradition?

CA, Virginia



From our readers



Breaking addictive patterns

Hello family! Though I find it difficult to write on demand, I have learned that whining about work seldom gets it done, but if I try, I may end up getting it done.

One of the things I struggle with today is my addictive use of substances such as cigarettes and coffee. My abstinence needs to include all mood- and mind-altering chemicals. My using brought me to a place where I knew that if it had continued, I would have died. I remember staring into my bathroom mirror and thinking my eyes looked dead. Total abstinence is a necessity for me.

Today my struggle is smoking. After having my first breathing test in ten years, I was told that I have the lungs of a seventy-year-old woman—more than twice my true age! I know that I have to quit. Emphysema is nearby if I continue.

Yet, even as I know that, my denial is such that I continue to smoke. I remember justifying my use of tobacco during my first year clean by cleverly saying that "a man with a broken leg does not walk too far without crutches." The problem today is that I know how to walk without crutches, and it's called the program

of Narcotics Anonymous. And, to continue with the analogy, I am walking along in my recovery still holding onto my tobacco/crutches.

Still, after coming to these meetings, knowing that applying Step One is the only way I can let it go, I am at a turning point. Very much like the examination of unmanageability I was taught to do by my sponsor for Step One, I found the behavior and accompanying insanity of tobacco use were the same.

It is not the warnings of impending illness that are creating my desire to quit smoking. It is the awareness of this pattern of addictive behavior in my life. Addiction means obsession and compulsion, and because the particular pattern of my use of tobacco is the same as it used to be for my use of drugs, I am now very afraid. I need help, and now I need to ask my sponsor.

Ironically, when I chose my sponsor, I coveted her serenity, not her smoke-free lifestyle. Now, I can appreciate her being smoke-free and draw on her experience with quitting as I go through it, too. I am grateful that today, through NA, I have everything I need to get through this: steps, sponsor, fellowship, and willingness.

CR, Canada

Comin'up

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

CANADA

British Columbia: 10-11 Aug. 1996; Camp Bananarama; Camp Nassichuck, Powell River; info: (604) 483-2131 or (604) 485-4368; Campout, 5452 Maple Ave., Powell River, British Columbia, Canada V8A 4N1

2) 23-25 Aug. 1996; Vernon Area's Oh-Yah-Man '96 Campout; info: (604) 832-3718 or (604) 833-4837; Oh-Yah-Man, Box 23, Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Canada V1E 4N2

Nova Scotia: 2-4 Aug. 1996; 7th Nova Scotia Area Convention; Truro; info: (902) 477-1983 or (902) 469-1609; Back to the Basics, PO Box 65, Central Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2L4

Quebec: 11-13 Oct. 1996; 9th Bilingual Area Convention; Auberge des Seigneurs, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec; rsvns: (800) 363-0110; info: (514) 352-2974; QRCNA, CP 312, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada J2S 1B6

COSTA RICA

San Jose: 15-17 Nov. 1996; 2nd Costa Rica Regional Convention; info: 506/256-8140; fax: 506/283-8663; Convention, PO Box 1546, 1002 Paseo de los Estudiantes, Costa Rica

DENMARK

Nordjylland: 4-6 Oct. 1996; North Jutlands Area Convention; Aalborg; info: 45/98135502 or 45/98212554; NA, Postbox 186, 9800 Hjørring, Denmark

FRANCE

Paris: 2-6 Oct. 1996; 6th Bilingual (French/English) Parisian Convention; Cite Universitaire, 19 Boulevard Jourdan, Paris; info: CBPNA-6, 11 rue de la Nativite, 75012, Paris, France

INDIA

West Bengal: 10-12 Jan. 1997; 2nd Calcutta Area Convention; Kishore Bharati Krirangen, Jadavpur, Santoshpur, Calcutta; info: please address fax to Sunil J. 91/33/2454748; CACNA-2, PO Box 9146, Park Street, Calcutta 700 016 India

Maharashtra: 24-26 Jan. 1997; Bombay Area Convention; info: 91/22/4461709 or 91/22/6425235 or 91/22/2619195; BACNA, PO Box 1953, GPO Mumbai, 400 001 India

MEXICO

Baja California Norte: 4-6 Oct. 1996; Baja California Convention, "El Milagro Continuo"; Grand Hotel, Tijuana; rsvns: (800) 472-6385; info: (619) 661-6100, ext. 2123 or 011 526-6815248 or 011 526-6815242; CBCNA-4, 4492 Camino de la Plaza, Suite TIJ, Box 1080, San Diego, CA 92173-3097

NEW ZEALAND

North Island: 20-22 Sept. 1996; Aoteroa New Zealand Regional Convention; Flock House Estate, Bulls; info: Convention, Box 133, Palmerston North, New Zealand

NORWAY

Vest Agder: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Norwegian NA Convention; info: 47/38095521; NAKristiansand, Postbox 58, 4601 Kristiansand S, Norway

PHILIPPINES

Metro Manila: 17-19 Jan. 1997; 2nd Philippine Regional Convention; Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati; info: e-mail tat@epic.net or fax: 63/2/8100279 or 63/2/5210592; Convention, PO Box 8535, Dasmariñas Village, Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines

SWEDEN

Stockholm: 25-27 Oct. 1996; Sweden Regional Service Conference; Stockholm; fax: 46/8/55241065

UNITED KINGDOM

West Midlands: 9-11 Aug. 1996; United Kingdom Convention; Birmingham Metropole Hotel, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham; rsvns: 44/121/7804242; info: 44/171/2729040 or 44/171/7300009; UKCNA-10, c/o NA Helpline, 38 Ebury Street, London SW1 England

UNITED STATES

California: 10 Aug. 1996; Southern California Region presents NA's 43rd Birthday Celebration, Meeting and Dance; Bren Events Center, UC Irvine Campus; info: (714) 824-5050

2) 12 Oct. 1996; 11th American River Area Unity Day; Hagan Community Park, Rancho Cordova; info: (916) 921-2062; Unity Day, PO Box 823, North Highlands, CA 95660

3) 25-27 Oct. 1996; Southern California Regional Convention; Anaheim Hilton; rsvns: (800) 445-8667; info: (805) 265-8518 or (909) 824-9104 or (818) 342-1411; SCRCNA, PO Box 60046, Pasadena, CA 91106

Connecticut: 27-29 Sep. 1996; United Shoreline Area Spiritual Weekend, Enders Island, Mystic; info: (860) 767-3299; USANA Spiritual Weekend, PO Box 354, Centerbrook, CT 06409

2) 1-3 Nov. 1996; United Shoreline Area Convention; Yankee Inn, Niantic; info: (860) 886-7512 or (860) 437-7229; USANA, PO Box 323, Norwich, CT 06360

Florida: 9-11 Aug. 1996; Uncoast Area Convention; Holiday Inn Sunspree, Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (352) 338-7929 or (352) 371-7918 or e-mail mikel@gnv.fdt.net; UCACNA, PO Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

2) 3-6 Oct. 1996; South Florida Regional Convention; Crowne Plaza, Miami; rsvns: (800) 465-4329; info: (305) 553-6174; SFRCA-4, PO Box 70155, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

3) 17-20 Oct. 1996; Surrender '96 Alabama/NW Florida Region's Spiritual Retreat; Lakepoint State Park Resort, Eufala; info: (205) 647-5595 or (205) 655-8221

4) 28 Nov. - 1 Dec. 1996; Palm Coast Area Convention; Airport Hilton, West Palm Beach; rsvns: (800) HILTONS; info: (407) 845-8663 or (407) 747-1497

Georgia: 8-11 Aug. 1996; Midtown Atlanta Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Courtland & International Bldgs.; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (404) 659-6500; info: (404) 753-5206 or (404) 753-1831; MACNA, PO Box 17557, Atlanta, GA 30316

Hawaii: 8-10 Nov. 1996; 10th Western States PI Learning Days; Ala Moana Hotel; rsvns: (800) 367-6025 or (808) 955-4811; info: (808) 833-1845 or (808) 834-4867; WSPILD, PO Box 30711, Honolulu, HI 96820

2) 14-17 Nov. 1996; Hawaii Regional Convention; Kauai Marriott; info: (808) 821-1038; fax: (808) 245-7255; HRCNA-5, PO Box 1854, Kapaa, HI 96746

Illinois: 14-16 Feb. 1997; 9th Chicagoland Regional Convention; Sheraton-Chicago; info: 9-5 CST (708) 848-2211; send speaker tapes before 30 Sept. to: CRC-9 Programming, c/o CSO, 212 S Marion St. #27, Oak Park, IL 60302

Kentucky: 20-22 Sept. 1996; Western Kentucky Area 9th Annual Freedom Between the Lakes; Energy Lake Campground, Golden Pond; info: (502) 443-5874; WKANA, PO Box 2866, Paducah, KY 42002-2866

Maine: 20-22 Sep. 1996; 13th Southern Maine Area Convention; Notre Dame Spiritual Center, Alfred; info: (207) 832-5129; SMASC, Convention Committee, PO Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

Maryland: 29 Nov. - 1 Dec. 1996; Freestate Regional Convention; BWI Marriott, Baltimore; info: (410) 242-0794 or (410) 644-2561; FSRCNA, 6400 Baltimore National, PO Box 328, Baltimore, MD 21228

Massachusetts: 7-9 Mar. 1997; New England Regional Convention; Westin, Waltham; rsvns: (800) 228-3000 or (617) 290-5600; info: (508) 446-0684; NERC-7, 733 Turnpike Street, Box 145, North Andover, MA 01845

Michigan: 25-27 Oct. 1996; Kalamazoo Area Convention; Clarion Hotel Cork Street, Kalamazoo; info: (616) 349-4802

Minnesota: 16-18 Aug. 1996; 2nd Annual "Just For the Weekend" Campout; Whispering Pines Campground, Houston; rsvns: (507) 281-4923; info: (507) 289-4104; ODSANA Campout, 220 13th Avenue SE, Rochester, MN 55904

Mississippi: 8-10 Nov. 1996; Surrender by the Seashore; Seashore Methodist Assembly, Biloxi; info: (601) 452-9868 or (601) 795-6308; Gulf Coast Area, PO Box 444, Gulfport, MS 39502

Missouri: 29 Aug. - 1 Sept. 1996; 26th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous; St. Louis; info: (818) 773-9999, ext. 200; WCNA-26, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

Nebraska: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Wyo-braska Unity Days; Camp Kiwanis, Riverside 200, Scottsbluff; info: (308) 783-2370; Wyo-braska Unity Days, Box 262, Minatare, NE 69356

2) 4-6 Oct. 1996; Nebraska Regional Convention; Beatrice; info: (402) 266-5808; NRCNA-13, PO Box 83872, Lincoln, NE 68501-3872

New Jersey: 8-10 Nov. 1996; Northern New Jersey Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Frontage Road, Newark; rsvns: (201) 690-5500; info: (908) 241-8021 or (908) 298-0786; NENJAC, PO Box 409, Roselle, NJ 07203

New York: 4-6 Oct. 1996; Mid-Hudson Area Convention; Friar Tuck Inn, Catskill; info: (914) 229-6708 or (914) 229-1066

North Carolina: 27-29 Sept. 1996; Central Piedmont Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Jake Alexander Blvd. South, Salisbury; info: (704) 663-0560 or (704) 637-9027; CPANA, PO Box 1294, Mooresville, NC 28115

Ohio: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Gateway to Freedom; Holiday Inn, Westlake; rsvns: (800) 762-7416 or (216) 871-6000; info: (216) 486-6644 or (216) 691-1024; Tri-Area Convention, PO Box 999, Shaker Heights, OH 44120

2) 11-13 Oct. 1996; Ohio Regional 9th Twelve Step Retreat; Tar Hollow State Park, Chillicothe; info: (419) 756-5459 or (513) 492-9725 or (419) 562-3141 or (419) 634-4628; ORSCNA, PO Box 453, Bucyrus, OH 44820

3) 29 Nov. - 1 Dec. 1996; Greater Cincinnati Area Convention; Westin Hotel, Cincinnati; rsvns: (513) 621-7700 or (800) 228-3000; info: (513) 751-3412 or (513) 948-0342; GCACNA, PO Box 141300, Cincinnati, OH 45202

4) 3-5 Jan. 1997; Central Ohio Area Convention; Radisson Hotel Columbus North; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (614) 846-0300; info: (614) 794-3357 or (614) 252-1700 or (614) 231-0831; COACNA-8, PO Box 44344, Columbus, OH 43204

Oklahoma: 2-4 Aug. 1996; Northside Area Stroll and Troll and Flying Chicken Contest; Greenleaf State Park, Braggs; info: (918) 245-4707

Oregon: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Campout & Fish Fry; Canal Creek, Waldport; info: Newport NA Fish Fry, PO Box 2071, Waldport, OR 97394

Pennsylvania: 2-4 Aug. 1996; Unity Weekend; Brookdale Campground, Meadville; info: (814) 336-3527; CWPASCNA, PO Box 1281, Meadville, PA 16335

2) 22-24 Nov. 1996; Start to Live; Tri-State Regional Convention; Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion; rsvns: (800) 452-2223; info: (412) 241-5016 or (412) 488-6124 or (412) 221-1025; send speaker tapes to: TSSRO, PO Box 121, Homestead, PA 15120

South Carolina: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Carolina Regional Awareness Weekend; Ramada Inn, Clemson, South Carolina; rsvns: (800) 288-2828 or (803) 654-7501; info: (704) 566-1974 or (803) 972-9441; Carolina Regional Service Awareness Weekend; CRSRC, 1327 Beeman Pl. #9, Greensboro, NC 27408

2) 14-17 Nov. 1996; Serenity Festival, Myrtle Beach; info: (803) 280-0273; Serenity Festival, PO Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

Tennessee: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Unity in the Mountains; Kingsport Inn, Kingsport; rsvns: (423) 247-3133; info: (423) 357-7464; MACNA, PO Box 5609, Johnson City, TN 37603

2) 2 Sept. 1996; Greater Smokey Mountain Area Unity Day; Panther Creek State Park; info: (800) 249-0012 or (423) 453-3924

3) 10-13 Oct. 1996; Surrender Under the Stars; Dogwood Lodge, Chattanooga; info: (423) 875-8764 or (706) 259-3451; Surrender, PO Box 23222, Chattanooga, TN 37422

4) 27 Nov. - 1 Dec. 1996; Volunteer Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Nashville; rsvns: (615) 259-2000; info: (615) 391-3122 or (615) 361-3783; VRC-14, PO Box 731, Madison, TN 37116

Texas: 8-10 Nov. 1996; Fort Worth Area Convention; Ramada Inn Downtown, Ft. Worth; rsvns: (800) 272-6232; info: (817) 921-3043 or (817) 280-0767; FWACNA, Box 122151, Fort Worth, TX 76121

Vermont: 16-18 Aug. 1996; Back to Basics Campout; Wallingford; info: (802) 773-5575

Virginia: 9-11 Aug. 1996; 10th Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4-H Education Center, Front Royal, Virginia; info: (304) 274-1522; CCC, PO Box 3329, Martinsburg, WV 25410

2) 4-6 Oct. 1996; OLANA Unityfest; Virginia Beach; rsvns: (800) 926-4466; info: (804) 488-8056; Unityfest, PO Box 120484, Newport News, VA 23612

3) 3-5 Jan. 1997; Rise to the Point of Freedom; Cavalier Hotel; rsvns: (800) 446-8199; info: (804) 467-4714 or (804) 397-7520; AVCNA, PO Box 64918, Virginia Beach, VA 23467

Washington: 20-22 Sep. 1996; 13th Spiritual Connection; Coronet Bay Environmental Learning Center, Deception Pass State Park, Woodby Island; info: (360) 647-2109; Spiritual Connection, PO Box 1001, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

2) 18-20 Oct. 1996; Pacific Northwest Convention; Holiday Inn Select, Olympia; rsvns: (360) 943-4000; info: (206) 382-0534; PNWCNA-19, PO Box 841, Kelso, WA 98626

West Virginia: 25-27 Oct. 1996; Mountaineer Regional Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley; rsvns: (304) 372-7860; info: (304) 562-5835; True Colors 9, PO Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502

Wisconsin: 9-11 Aug. 1996; Kettle Moraine Area Unity Jam Campout; Camp Y-Koda, Sheboygan; info: (414) 458-7078; KMASC, PO Box 1022, Sheboygan, WI 53082-1022

2) 18-20 Oct. 1996; Wisconsin Regional Convention; Eau Claire; info: WSNAC-13, 142 Broadway Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703

Wyoming: 27-29 Sep. 1996; Convention on Unity; Rawlins; info: (307) 875-5867; CUNA-5, PO Box 325, Green River, WY 82935

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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA 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 NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA 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. NA, 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 NA 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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