

**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.

**December 1996 \$1.75 US \$2.50 Canadian**

## When I Care

## and When I Share With Others The NA Way





## 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



## Please tell us what you think

As I write this, it's the 4<sup>th</sup> of October. The October issue should have just recently arrived in your mailboxes. That issue reported that we were working on two tracks with NA's periodicals program. One, we were trying to provide as many opportunities as possible for the fellowship to support its magazine. Two, we were preparing for the possibility that our periodicals program was no longer serving the needs of the fellowship and needed to be redesigned.

We have continued along these tracks for the past two months. At this writing, NA Way subscriptions still have not increased, though I've had many phone calls from loyal subscribers offering to do anything to help generate subscriptions. I've responded by sending promotional packages to these members.

I would like to point out that until you, the fellowship, approve a change to your periodicals program, everything will stay the same. We still need manuscript submissions. We're still publishing your events in "Comin' Up." We'll continue to send bills and renewal notices to NA Way subscribers.

By the time you receive this, the WSO board will have met in November and decided to recommend *something* to the fellowship about its periodicals program. Unfortunately, as I write this, I don't know what the rec-

ommendation will be. Therefore, I can only offer, as I have before, to answer your questions if you'd like to give me a call.

But even more important than answering your questions, we have some questions we need you to answer. Do you want to know about new products (literature, trustee bulletins, etc.)? Do you want reports on the issues being discussed by our worldwide fellowship, such as changing the world service structure? Do you want a written forum where members can share their recovery in print? How can we present this information in such a way that the average member would want to read it? If we had a publication with all these components, how important would it be to you? Should resources be allocated to support it? To what degree?

As I'm sure you are beginning to sense, I could keep on asking questions for another four or five pages and still have many more, but I'm sure you're getting the general drift. The staff and trusted servants at WSO desperately need your feedback on our periodicals program. Please send written input to:

WSO  
PO Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

CT, Editor

## Who can I trust?

When we come into the program, we are told that we need to talk to another person, to share our past, all those secrets. The big question is: just who can I trust?

When I was new, I was told to take the cotton out of my ears and put it in my mouth. In other words, shut up and listen. I was told that I didn't have any recovery yet, so I didn't have anything to talk about. I was lucky enough to have a lady explain all these hard words of wisdom to me. I was told that if I would really listen to the ones sharing, hear what they were saying, I would soon be able to locate the "winners."

So what is a "winner"? A winner is one who really is working the program the way it is supposed to be worked. It shows in the quality of the program that person is working, not the number of years they have accumulated. A person with just a few years can have a much higher quality of recovery than one who has added up many years but never got out of the rut of the past.

I have learned to listen to the key words that tell me quite a bit about a person. Such words as "he said," "she said," or "I was told" let me know that

the person talking is only repeating what someone else has said or done and is not actually walking the walk for themselves. Another big clue for me is when a person talks about his or her past all the time. If a person can only tell and retell what the bad times were like, he or she is not working a program and learning to live in the present. I want to hear about how to live without drugs. We all know how it was to live in the miserable past.

If I hear someone use the key words "I have," or "I did," or "what happened to me was," then I know that person has actually experienced the feelings, good or bad. In other words, she has been there. She has walked the walk. If I hear someone who is telling of how the program helped him through a big problem and telling of the good things in recovery, to me that is a sure sign that that person is working a program, the sign of a winner.

I had no problem in trusting my Higher Power, which I choose to call God. I guess I could say that I knew God wouldn't go tell someone else what I had so humbly confided in Him. This part of trusting was no problem for me. Even at first, when I felt God had no use for me, I knew He could be trusted. At that point, the problem was getting myself to accept the fact that I had another chance.

Then there is the trust of the group. I was told to be careful what I shared at the group meetings. Some things are not meant to be discussed in a meeting, but rather should be shared with my sponsor or another member I could trust. I felt that the group, as a whole, was able to accom-



plish what I could not as an individual. I was willing to trust the group members enough to do what they suggested. These suggestions were things like "live one day at a time," "go to meetings," "read your book," "talk to other members," and "keep coming back." I learned a lot at those early meetings and I have continued learning all this time. I firmly believe that I can never stand still. I either move forward or slide back. So I must always be willing to learn more and pray I never reach a point where I think I know it all. Life keeps moving, and I must always be willing to move with it.

This still left me with the need to find a person I could trust one-on-one. This was very hard as I had little use and no trust for either men or women when I came into the program.

I learned long ago in the program that among the character defects of people, gossip should be at the top of a lot of people's lists. I am grateful for one of my grandparents, who often made the comment, "If you can't say something good about a person, don't say anything at all." I guess this sank in deeper than I realized while growing up, as I seem to really notice people who could not talk if they weren't talking about someone else.

Too many times I have overheard people in the coffee room talking and telling what was shared in confidence.

I have to assess people's capacity for harm (take their inventory, if you will) when I am looking for someone to trust. I have to look at the good and bad qualities. It is important to realize that this is for my protection and not to cause the person any harm or embarrassment in any way. I have to be sure that I have confidence in a person with whom I plan to share my deepest secrets. I don't share my assessments of people with others or even with the people I'm assessing. I just note the information for myself. Some of the questions I ask myself are: "Does that person have the quality of recovery that I want when I grow up in the program?" "Does that person show real concern when talking to others who have pulled her aside before or after a meeting?" A look on someone's face can often tell me if there is real interest or not. To me, the secret is to watch and listen and, most important, pray for a person to be put in my life.

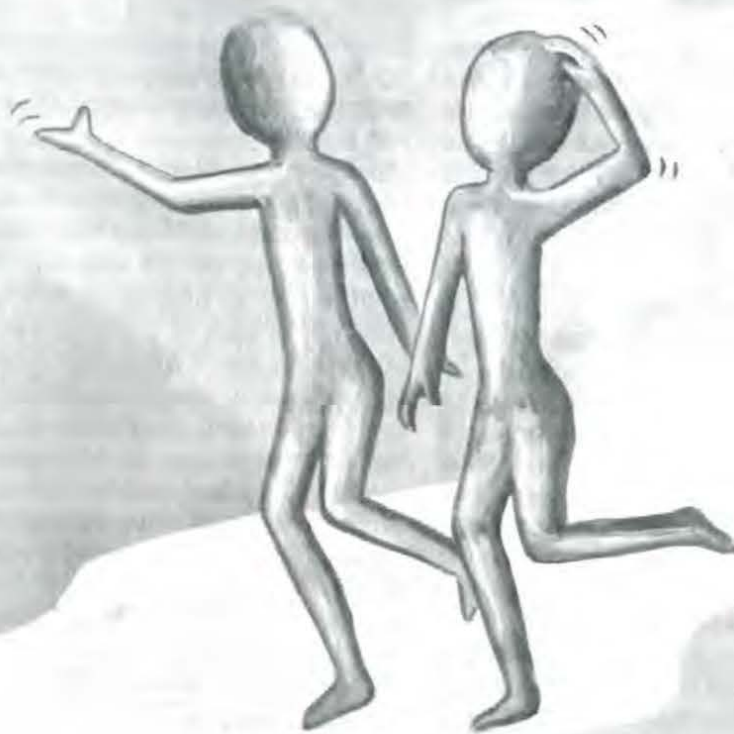
I will share one of my first experiences with this issue of trust. When I needed to talk to someone, I looked around and found a lady I felt I could trust. I casually mentioned the topic that was bothering me in a very general way. Even today I can remember how it was when she told me that she would share a secret with me that I wasn't to tell anyone. Then she went on to tell me of an event in her past. I was really put at ease with this woman because what she shared with me could have caused lots of problems

for her if it were to be told. I was well aware of this, and for this reason I was able to totally confide in her what was bothering me. To this day I have never told a soul what she confided in me, and I know she has never told anyone what I trusted her with.

As I come up on my thirteenth NA birthday, I can look back and see how important it has been all through these years for me to listen to those around me who are sharing, to really listen to what they are saying. When I am talking one-on-one and a person starts telling me all about someone else, I immediately mark that person off the list of people I can trust.

I have experienced two very memorable events that illustrate what I mean. One was a time after a meeting when a group of us went to the local cafe for coffee. Across the table, I heard another member being discussed in full detail. That member had been at the meeting, but was not at the cafe. I am glad I had enough time in the program to comment that I felt these people ought to take their own inventory, not the other person's. I had no problem saying it, either. I really didn't care what they thought of me for saying it, because if that was as good as their own programs were, I wouldn't miss them in my life.

Another time, after I had recently moved to a new area, I was referred to a lady for sponsorship. She was the sponsor of the one who referred me. I was delighted to think I could find a local sponsor and not have to go through the elimination process again. The first time I met this woman, I told her the name of the friend who suggested I come talk to





her. Immediately this woman, who was supposed to be such a good sponsor, launched into a tale about my friend, something that had been told to her in confidence, and I never said another word about her helping me in any way. I was hurt that anyone with the amount of time she had could not be trusted. Here was a perfect example: she had the number of years, but not the quality I wanted. I could not trust her.

To me, the program teaches us to live a new life, to help others, not hurt them. I have seen a lot of changes in people in the program over the years. Some have come in and really wanted what was available to them. They have been willing to change and do the Twelve Steps in the order they are written. I have seen many people come from a very sick, miserable place, and become healthy, happy people. And when you look into their eyes, they sparkle.

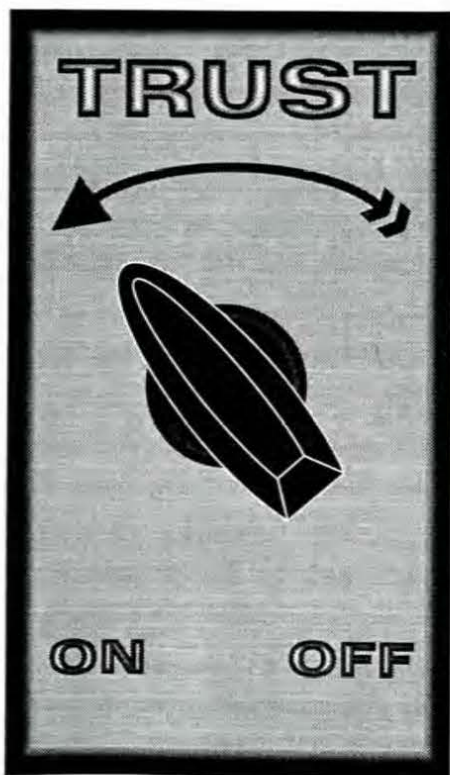
Then there are those who come in and, on the surface act like they are working a program. But for some reason, they won't do a Fifth Step, won't let go of the past, or whatever is going on for them. They never seem to be happy, relaxed, and free. Look in their eyes, and they do not have that happy, bright shine. I feel there are a lot of people in the program who are not here for the right reasons. I feel sorry for them because they are missing the best thing that could ever happen to them.

When I came in, I wanted to change. I wanted to find happiness. I wanted to be able to look at myself in a mirror and like who was looking back at me. I wanted that inner peace

the group kept talking about. When I was given this opportunity I was grateful, and I was told that the only way I could repay it was to pass it on and help others. Over the years I have done a lot of Fifth Steps with a lot of women, all of whom trusted me and cared for me as I cared for them. My only concern was that they find what I had found.

Always remember, you are setting an example every day for someone who is coming behind you. Can you be trusted? They will see it in the way you talk and the way you live your program.

*JW, Texas*



## It's working

My name is Alan, and I'm a recovering addict. I have been a member of Narcotics Anonymous since last April, and after a lifetime of self-pity, resentment, anger, guilt, and self-loathing; I am coming to know and love myself through applying the principles suggested in the twelve-step programme of NA. To lose the fear of people, places, and things one day at a time is surely a wonderful gift bestowed on me by a higher power.

I was never able to understand why I felt, acted, and behaved the way I did before I used, while I used, and, to some extent, after I stopped using. The sum total of my life preceding recovery amounted to failure: failed marriage, failed career, failed friendships, failed education. In fact, every aspect of my life was wrapped in failure. I didn't like myself and a lot of other people didn't like me. I created a bad atmosphere in groups. I was insensitive to people's feelings, frequently trampling all over people's emotions. I was a cynic. I didn't believe in any kind of God. I thrived on my ability to dissect others' faith in God, exposing every crack in their faith and ridiculing the whole idea.

I could write more of my failings and defects of character, but I hope by now you can identify with some of my

addiction's characteristics. I didn't know any of this until I joined NA and learned that I was suffering from a disease that made me use to live and live to use. I listened to experienced members, and I plucked up the courage to ask someone to be my sponsor very early in my recovery. This has been an enormous help to me in understanding each step in the programme. I draw on my sponsor's experience with recovery, and I enjoy a very trusting and loving relationship in which I feel safe enough to be able to tell him anything about how I think, feel, and act, knowing that he will understand and not judge me. When I came to look at Step Two, and after great difficulty in coming to believe, he suggested that I "act as if" I believed in a higher power. By practising this act one day at a time, my belief would come.

The amazing thing about this principle is that it works in many other areas of my recovery. For example, when I attended a job interview recently, I acted as if I had confidence and, needless to say, the interview went extremely well. Another example involves my problem with gratitude. I was once so full of self-pity. Now I practise acting grateful, and again something has happened to me that is physical, mental, and spiritual—a sense of being that I want and need to share with others, addict or otherwise. My life has changed in the short time I have been a member of NA.

I have begun to be loving, grateful, confident, and feel like I am gaining self-esteem. Many times I have cursed other people, questioned my



faith, and doubted NA, but through the love I have been so freely given by addicts, I have been able to continue to grow up. I have an understanding of growth through pain. By looking back at situations with hindsight, I can see that every feeling, situation, test, and obstacle was necessary in order for me to write this letter this evening.

I started an NA meeting in my town, and although I receive much support from my addict friends in Glasgow, it hasn't yet grown in numbers. As frustrating as this feels, I shall continue to keep the door open for suffering addicts for as long as it be God's will.

*AC, Scotland*

## Why am I here?

Of all the literature available in NA, I love the reading "Why Are We Here?" the best. I'm the type of person who likes to get hung up in the "why" of things. When I came to NA, I was told to ask "how," not "why." I practiced that suggestion for several years.

Then I came up against the hardest year in my recovery, and the "ask how, not why" principle went right out the window. A year ago on Christmas Eve, my husband was rushed to the hospital, just weeks after we'd moved into our own home. He was diagnosed with brain metastasis after six years of being cancer-free and seemingly "cured." I was overwhelmed and very frightened. I cried for three days straight. Disturbingly, my sponsor and every one of my sponsees were away in other parts of the country for the holiday season. I felt abandoned—my support system didn't even know I was in trouble! I thought I couldn't recall how it worked—that's what my mind told me, anyway—and that I'd never get through this clean.

I went to meetings and shared all the raw stuff. Without my support system, what choice did I have? I

talked to people in the rooms with whom I'd never shared my personal stuff before. I leaned hard on my sponsor when she returned, and on one other good friend. I prayed. I accepted the prayers of others and thanked them. I talked to my higher power at all hours of the day and night. I got caught up in the role of "superwoman," doing everything, asking for nothing but the strength to carry on. Other people told me how I inspired them by staying clean in the midst of such a nightmare.

Little by little, I got pissed off. I started to wonder why I was going through this. I wondered this because, as much as I shared with others, there were no other women I knew who had gone through such a thing. I needed someone to share with me, too. I got angry at my higher power. I started to feel unique. I started to carry resentments. I stopped praying.

I turned to outside help, only to learn that NA helped me best. Although I didn't want to, I wrote down my resentments. I practiced accepting the help I was offered without judging its quality. I began to pray again. I stopped questioning my higher power, asking why I had to go through this without a human guide whose similar experience could keep me feeling connected to the fellowship. Time passed. It got better for me.

A few months ago I took on a new sponsee. Within weeks her husband became quite ill—on almost the exact day my husband had been taken ill last year. The new relationship between my sponsee and me took off at

astounding speed as she called on me to share my experience and give her a bit of strength and hope that she could carry with her. Then another sponsee faced a similar situation with her companion, and I found myself again in the role of sharing my own journey from fear to faith.

In hindsight, the "why" of it became quite clear. I am humbled and honored to learn that my higher power blessed me with that living hell so that I could be there to help someone else when the time came. One addict helping another—that's why I'm here.

*AW, New Jersey*





## Still my priority

I came into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous in the summer of 1988, and I can still say that nothing is quite as challenging as that first year. First of all, it took me thirty days to start counting my clean time because that phrase "alcohol is a drug" kept going over my head. Finally, someone explained it to me and I understood. I made some major changes in my fourth and fifth months. I let go of a relationship. I moved. I found a job. I got tested for the Virus. The suggestion is that you make no major changes in your first year, but sometimes these changes clear a path for recovery. In my case they did. I don't regret making those changes. I know I did the right thing. Of course, recovery was my priority.

The "Immediately Searching for Freedom" group in the Bronx, New York, became my home group. I started forming a support group, and at sixty-five days clean I got a sponsor who had twelve years clean and Twelve Steps in her life. I took a coffee commitment at a women's meeting, and at six months clean I started doing H&I service.

At eighteen months clean I was living again with my children, who were then young adults. (I had abandoned them when they were thirteen and fourteen.) I was also in a new relationship and a new apartment. That worked out fine. I was able to make amends to my children. Today we have a good relationship, and they know I'm okay now.

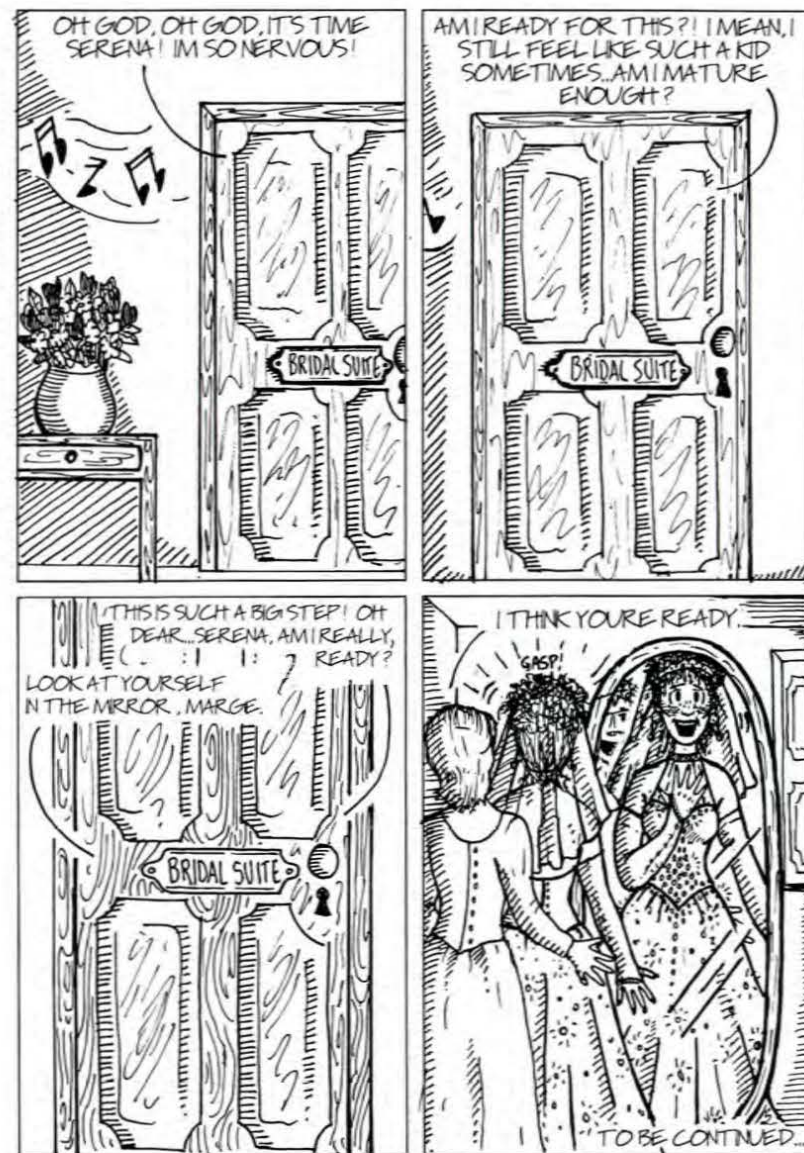
At two years clean I had worked all Twelve Steps with my sponsor. I was so grateful. My life had turned around. I felt it getting stable. At three years clean my relationship with my Higher Power was good. I had never felt so close to Him before.

From then to now, a lot has happened. I've had service positions at the group, area, regional, and world levels. I do service from the heart. I make meetings on a regular basis. I have a strong loyalty to this fellowship and recovery is still my priority.

Today I live in the place where I was born. NA is here, too. I'm still involved in service. I married the man I began a relationship with when I had eighteen months clean. I travel a lot, which was something I had dreamed about as a child, but forgot about when I was using. I like my job. I have several sponsees. I have a good sponsor, and my recovery is still my priority.

*LFK, Puerto Rico*

## Home Group







# Newsletters

## Open arms

**From *The Clean Times*, the Tampa Funcoast, Florida, area newsletter**

Unfortunately, we sometimes fall short of doing the very best we can to meet and greet newcomers. It's important to welcome all newcomers and let them know they are home. I remember getting hugs at my first NA meeting. Even though I was a little uncomfortable at first, I soon grew to like it.

It's important for my own personal recovery to stay focused on carrying the message to the newcomer. Some of the ways this can be achieved are by reading decorum statements such as "please take side conversations outside" and inviting children to play quietly so as to not disturb the meeting, etc.

It's very important that the chairperson of the meeting be qualified to chair. It's also important to have a structured format. As a newcomer, I

had absolutely no structure or consistency in my life other than the meetings.

Last, but not least, the meeting after the meeting is also a place where we meet and greet newcomers. When I was new, going out for coffee was very crucial to my recovery. It was there that I was able to really enjoy the fellowship and begin to pick the winners in NA. As a recovering addict, I go to meetings for three important reasons. First, they work to keep me clean. Second, I need the support of other addicts. Third, I owe it to the newcomers to help them. I need to be there to meet, greet, and welcome them with open arms and let them know they never have to use again.

*RV, Florida*

## Trust has to be earned

**From *Basic News*, the Lower Mainland multi-area newsletter, British Columbia**

Service work has been very important in my recovery. I started early at the group level and worked my way down to the area level. I have held different chairperson positions at the area level and have enjoyed them all. I have met a lot of different people from all over the province, the country, and the world. I value all the friends I have made through service. It feels good to walk into a convention and see people I know from far away.

Being involved in service has made it impossible for me to avoid working on myself. It has caused me to take a look at issues that I was not aware of before. Many of my assets and defects have come up in doing service work. I have learned a lot about myself and how I deal with different situations. A lot of what I learned I have not liked, and many times I have been embarrassed about my behavior at area meetings. Being involved in service has forced me to grow and make changes in how I deal with the rest of the world.

In the recent past, it was discovered that I had misappropriated NA funds, and it wasn't the first time. When an NA member confronted me about it, I did what any good addict

would do: I lied, denied, and stalled for time. In the end I still didn't admit to taking the money, but I did agree to pay it back, and I have paid it back. When I was first confronted about this, I got angry and wanted to strike out, to try to make someone else feel like I was feeling at the time. I wanted to use my life situation as an excuse for taking the money.

You would think that after going through this once already I would have learned a lesson, but no, not I. I realized after I had calmed down that I was angry at myself and very ashamed. I was also afraid that if I didn't own my inappropriate behavior I could be on my way out of the program. I had to share about this, get it out in the open, take its power away. I first shared it at one meeting, then a few nights later at another meeting.

My sponsor was at the second meeting. He asked me if I wanted to talk. I was afraid to talk to him because I thought he might be angry at me and not forgive me. I was feeling so much guilt and shame that getting loaded was running through my mind—a lot. From my sponsor I got some direction to talk to another addict involved in service work. I was afraid at first, but no one made me feel judged or looked down on me.

For myself, I feel I cannot be called or call myself a trusted servant. The money was not mine. I need to apologize to NA members because I stole from you. I am sorry. I hope I have learned that to spend NA money is to step out the door of NA. I look forward to the day when I can honestly call myself a trusted servant again.

*BW, British Columbia*



# Viewpoint



## Walking with faith

When I first came into the program, I was turned off by all of the talk about God and a Higher Power. I had a really closed mind about these concepts and believed that I was the master of my own destiny (even though I had to admit that my way got me nowhere fast).

I didn't have any religion or spirituality in my upbringing, so it was up to me to decide what to believe or not to believe. I guess you could say that for most of my life my Higher Power was science, nature, and logic. These were things that were tangible and could be described in terms of cause and effect. I called myself agnostic. If you couldn't prove something, I reserved judgment on it.

In my early meetings, I cringed whenever I heard talk about God. When I read NA literature, I glossed over any reference to a Higher Power. But in the "How It Works" reading, it clearly stated that there was one thing more than anything else that

could defeat me in my recovery, and that was an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles.

After a short while, I started to worry that I wouldn't make it in the program, because I just didn't get it. It seemed that everyone else was comfortable with the concept of God, but I wasn't. I decided not to worry about it, and to just keep doing what I was doing.

Three years have gone by since then, and the ironic thing is that the spiritual part of the program is now the *driving force* in my life. To be honest, I really don't know how I made this transition; it just happened. I believe that it can and will happen to anyone as long as they keep coming back and work on their recovery. The irony is that spirituality came to me when I was ready. I didn't go to it. And spirituality was working in my life long before I recognized it. When I realized that spirituality was working through the people in the program, I started to open my mind. In early recovery, I read a little quotation that really explained it for me:

"I looked for my God, but I could not see,

"I searched for my soul, and it eluded me.

"Then I sought my brother, and I found all three."

Today, spirituality is the most important aspect of my life. I now know that my existence encompasses much more than just the physical and intellectual realms.

I see my existence as spanning four levels. At the lowest level is my physical existence, experienced by my physical senses. At the next level is my emotional existence, experienced by feelings that aren't necessarily rational or logical. (I refused to venture into this level for most of my life, and still often have difficulty with it.) At the third level is my intellectual existence, which gives me the ability to conceptualize and imagine. At the highest level is my spiritual existence, which transcends the other three levels and uses them to express spirituality. At the spiritual level is a place of perfect peace, harmony, and universal unconditional love. It connects me to my Higher Power and the spirits of other people. I can't quite reach that perfect place in my human existence, but it is always there, ever waiting for me to receive it when I am open and ready.

So who is my God? I don't really know, but I know that he (or she, or it) exists. It will be a lifelong journey for me to discover. I'm not ready to put a definition on it, or to say that I believe in any specific religion, denomination, or sect. Maybe I never will. But I am on an exciting quest to learn as much as I can, and I truly have an open mind for the first time in my life. I read all kinds of spiritual literature, and I am trying to learn as much as I can from many different sources, everything from Native American spirituality to Roman Catholicism. My belief at the moment is that they are

all talking about the same thing in different ways. Today, I don't need to concern myself with what is or what isn't; all that I have to do is walk with faith.

I recently discovered that there are five spiritual beliefs that are directly related to my level of serenity at any given point in time. They are all attitudes of faith. Since I am human and cannot reach a place of perfect serenity, my attitudes change from day to day and moment to moment. My attitudes span the levels of belief from doubting (questionable faith) to thinking, believing, and knowing (unquestionable faith).

### God has a plan for me.

I used to believe that there was no plan and that I was the master of my destiny. Today I know that there is more at work than I had ever realized. Too many things have happened in my recovery to be considered coincidences or my doing. People in the program have been instruments of great healing for me, and that is all part of God's plan for me. When I truly believe that God has a plan for me, I can stop trying to control and manipulate everything and everyone around me, and take comfort in the belief that the plan is in progress and everything is on schedule. I will learn when I am ready to learn, and I will heal when I am ready to heal, no sooner. An amazing amount of serenity can be achieved by letting go and having faith in God's plan for me. On the other hand, if I doubt that the plan is right for me, or that it even exists, I can become totally lost in a big hurry.



### God's will for me is good.

God doesn't want me to suffer or to live in fear. God wants me to heal and to experience all the beauty of the universe. God wants me to feel all the love in the world, and to see the good in everything. God wants me to have good things in my life in abundance. If I allow the guilt and shame of the old world of active addiction to consume me, I end up believing that I don't deserve these things. But that is not what God wants. By working the steps I learn to forgive myself and others, and eventually start to believe that God's will for me is good. When I practice the spiritual principles of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, I get closer and closer to God's will for me. My belief is that eventually God's will for me becomes my own true will for myself. When that happens, I truly feel at one with the universe, and I *know* that God's will for me is good.

### Everything is happening exactly as it's supposed to be happening.

Sometimes, especially in times of pain and confusion, it becomes difficult to believe that what I am experiencing is part of God's plan for me. If I look at situations negatively, I can convince myself that they serve no purpose other than pain and misery. However, if I am open to the spirituality of the program, I come to understand that these are learning experiences, and that they are exactly what I need to experience in order to grow. I am truly my own worst enemy, and am the first one to condemn myself. I can easily get trapped in the attitudes

of "could have," "should have," and "would have," but that does not help me. Things are happening for a reason, I *am* learning exactly what I need to learn, and I *am* healing as quickly as possible.

### I am right where I am supposed to be at this moment.

Sometimes I feel really lost, and struggle with the variety of emotions that surface as I learn to experience life on life's terms. That is not surprising, since I spent most of my life avoiding feelings and running away from problems. If I am angry, sad, or confused, that is okay. It is exactly where I need to be at this moment. Even if the moment is uncomfortable or painful, I am experiencing what I need to experience. If I tell myself that I shouldn't be feeling this way or compare myself with others, I am getting away from the lessons I need to learn. And if I don't learn the lessons this time around, the feelings will return until I do learn. It is all part of God's plan.

### No matter what happens, it's going to be okay.

This is a critical attitude for anyone in recovery, and it's an attitude that can sometimes become difficult to maintain. Life on life's terms often presents us with situations that seem unbearable, and these are the times when we begin to question everything and lose faith in ourselves, the program, and God's plan for us. These are also the times when we really need the fellowship and conscious contact with our Higher Power. The healing is there waiting for us, and the love is available to us—all that we have to do

is reach for it. And when we can't believe in ourselves, there is *always* someone in the program who believes in us and can carry us through until we believe in ourselves again.

If I can say that at this moment I know that these five spiritual beliefs are true, I have achieved true serenity. If I can say that I doubt these five things, my serenity is questionable at best. We all know that there are many hardships in recovery, and that at times it is difficult (if not impossible) to walk with faith. And in all honesty, my faith has spanned the full range from doubting to knowing. The important thing is that when my faith moves from knowing to just believing (or wanting to believe), I stay in contact with people in recovery. And as my faith moves from believing to just thinking, I do whatever I have to do to stay clean and build my faith. And most importantly, when I move into an attitude of doubt, I find someone else who has faith in me and the pro-

gram and can offer me some hope. That is precisely how and why the program works: *sometimes I carry the message, and sometimes the message carries me*. In the end we all receive a new way of life, freedom from the horrors of addiction, and the priceless gift of serenity.

I am forever grateful for the new life that I have found in recovery. If I were to say that every day is rosy, that would not be reality. Recovery is difficult at best, but it is definitely worth it. Some of my learning experiences are very painful, but I always end up in a safe place, and I always learn more valuable lessons. Today I am happy to say that I *know* that God has a plan for me, I *know* that God's will for me is good, I *know* that everything is happening exactly as it's supposed to be happening, I *know* that I am right where I am supposed to be, and I *know* that everything is going to be better than okay.

DS, Manitoba





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## A resentment by any other name

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You're sitting at your home group meeting. Someone is reading the introduction to "We Do Recover," Chapter Eight of our Basic Text. The reader is droning on. Your attention wanders, and all of a sudden you hear, "This is a simple spiritual — NOT RELIGIOUS! — program, known as Narcotics Anonymous."

This is not some fantasy I've made up to make a point. I've heard this portion of our Basic Text read with the same emphasis dozens and dozens of times throughout my time in NA. The same tone arises when we read the part of Chapter Three that says, "Many of us sought help through medicine, religion, and psychiatry. None of these methods was sufficient for us."

We read these things as though they say "spiritual and anti-religious program" and "none of these methods are any good and should be avoided at all costs."

I've noticed that our program seems to have a collective resentment against organized religion. This resentment is used to twist the words of

our Basic Text into something they don't really say.

Saying that our program isn't religious doesn't mean our members can't be. Saying that religion wasn't sufficient for us means it hasn't worked for us as a way of recovery from our addiction. It doesn't mean religion can't have any part in our lives and won't help us in any way.

We all came to Narcotics Anonymous because we had drug problems and wanted help. And that's just what we get in NA. Anyone who works the steps and comes to meetings can get freedom from having to use drugs and all that goes along with that. In my opinion, nothing is better for an addict seeking recovery than NA. In NA, I've found absolutely everything I could possibly need to recover from addiction.

But my life is not all NA. I work, and sometimes attend professional seminars to help me keep current with the latest in my field. I have children, and I belong to parents' organizations. I go to school. I participate in many political activities (none are NA service). I've been to therapy several times in my recovery, both with members of my family and by myself. And (brace yourself) I'm religious.

Of all the information in the above paragraph, the only one I talk about in meetings is my children, usually when the topic is gratitude. If you're not one of my close friends, and you're sitting in a meeting with me, you'd never know how I vote (not relevant to NA recovery), what things I dealt with in therapy (too personal for an NA meeting), or that I'm religious

(not relevant to NA recovery and potentially damaging to the spiritual path of other members).

So I don't share inappropriate things in meetings. I'm not guilty of proselytizing (my religion frowns on that anyway). I've sponsored women from a variety of faiths or lack of them. I'm very, very careful when I talk about my understanding of G-d around NA not to suggest that my understanding has to be yours.

Since I'm respectful, I'd like a little respect for my beliefs. Instead, I have been warned repeatedly that my involvement in my religion is dangerous, that I had better make meetings my priority. I go to three NA meetings a week, but never on Friday night or Saturday during the day. I guess some people think that this single twenty-four hour period is the only time you can score. I don't explain why I'm declining food when we go out after the meeting. I just sip my water and don't order anything. But I have been ridiculed many times when someone guesses why. My religion has led to me getting involved in a number of community activities like a battered women's shelter and visiting people at an AIDS hospice. I get so much fulfillment from doing things; they're so much a part of my life that not to talk about them in casual conversations outside meetings is like asking other people not to talk about their work, the movie they saw last week, or the new CD they just bought. Yet, I feel like I can't talk about these things because my fellow NA members exchange amused glances whenever I mention my "outside" activities.

These attitudes hurt more than you can possibly imagine. There's a huge wall between me and many other members whom I might otherwise be friends with because they're so uncomfortable with religion.

There is a rampant subconscious fear in our program that we might run off some poor newcomer if we talk too much about spirituality or say the "G" word. It's amazing to me that anyone could mistake NA for a religion. There's no formal worship of a deity, no dogma, no minister in charge of running our gatherings. We sit on uncomfortable folding chairs and moldy couches, not pews. We may talk about G-d in our meetings, but it's usually in the same breath as some of the filthiest words I've ever heard. Many of our members openly bash certain religions and their adherents. And, of course, we've got the snarled "spiritual, NOT RELIGIOUS, program" just in case anyone isn't clear about where they are.

In recovery, we're supposed to get over our resentments. We can call our negative feelings about religion something else, but it's still a resentment. I think we need to stop apologizing for the fact that G-d moves in this program. We need to acknowledge our recovery as the miracle it is and give credit to the Source of that miracle. We as an organization have been very concerned in the last few years about making sure our message transcends language and culture. In our efforts to be inclusive, let's not forget those who just happen to have a little religion in their lives. We need recovery, too.

*ME, New York*



# From our readers



## Just simple recovery

I am saddened by the news that *The NA Way* may be discontinued. I have been a subscriber for the past several years and always look forward to receiving my gift in the mail every month.

It's not someone asking for money or trying to sell me orthopedic stockings; there are no promises of free gifts or trips with a renewed subscription. Just simple recovery. Just friends I've yet to meet.

I read my issues in small increments. One or two stories during my dinner break at work helps me relax and digest my food. No stories of death and corruption or headlines that depress me. Just simple recovery. I also keep copies in my car to read while I'm waiting for my mom at the doctor's office. I never took my mom anywhere when I was using, let alone read anything positive while waiting for her.

*The NA Way* has proven to me many times over that recovery is timeless; there are no limits or boundaries to what I can learn from others before or after me. I can pick up a copy from last year and read it as if it's the first time I've ever seen it. Old issues become new, someone's past is my present, and for that I'm grateful.

Reading "This Too Shall Pass," which is one of my favorite slogans, has helped see me through the death of my lover, loss of my home, and financial devastation, all in one month. For the first few years of struggling to deal with all these issues and having difficulty listening at meetings due to my pain, I would read a few articles in *The NA Way* and cry from a deep sense of gratitude that someone from Manitoba could help me get through another day by renewing my hope and belief that I wasn't alone. For this I am extremely grateful.

I am sad that others have not heard the message through *The NA Way*. I have given copies to newcomers who didn't have the money for a subscription and have watched them devour and savor every word from front to back, and then thank me for sharing it with them. Just simple recovery. *The NA Way* has helped me help the sick and suffering addicts in my area, and for that I am grateful.

I will continue to enjoy my gift from California every month for as long as it lasts. I truly hope that we can keep *The NA Way* in circulation so that others can experience the joy of recovery from friends they've yet to meet from Manitoba and England and wherever this program exists, while riding in a bus, at work, or in the

solitude of their own homes. Thank you for helping me stay grateful and for being part of my recovery.

TM, New York

## Worth the cost

My name is Dany, and I'm a grateful recovering addict. I owe my recovery to many sources: the fellowship, my sponsor, my friends at the meeting, and our literature. That includes *The NA Way*. It has really saved my ass several times when I could not reach any of my friends or my sponsor.

We have one meeting here in my hometown with about six to eight members. Sometimes I get resentful, angry, and frustrated, and wish strongly that I lived in an NA community with ten meetings a week. But when I turn a few pages in *The NA Way*, I realize that people all over the world have the same problems. I'm not alone. This is carrying the message—our primary purpose.

After reading about it in *The NA Way*, we are planning to visit a meeting in Czechoslovakia. Thanks for letting us know. When I need personal stories rather than other literature, *The NA Way* is a very important tool in my recovery. I don't want to miss it.

We spend thousands of dollars for conferences and conventions in hotels and we don't seem to think that's too much money to spend. It worries me that money seems to be so very important in NA. Sure, we deserve hotels, no problem. But spending money for that and not *The NA Way* is not the right way for me.

We do H&I meetings in my hometown and it hasn't paid off so far (no newcomers). So what? Does that mean we should stop doing H&I work?

Give the newcomers a chance, give them room in *The NA Way* for their comments and experiences. Print some stories from people in other countries. Make *The NA Way* more attractive. Don't let the money divert us from our primary purpose.

DP, Germany

## My friend

Some time ago I told myself I would write to *The NA Way*. I never got around to it—partly because of my own fear that what I wrote would not be good enough, and partly because I assumed it would always be there and I could do it later, when I had more recovery.

Now I am facing losing one of my very best friends and I realize that I always took my friend for granted. I realize that I've failed to show the gratitude that I felt and that I now face paying dearly for it. Many times when I was in the depths of despair and wanting to use, this good friend reached out to me and gave me a message of recovery. Many times, when I was hopelessly mired in self-pity, this friend showed me examples of recovery that shone on through times much darker than my own. Many times, when I was filled with anger and resentment at the selfish intolerance of this fellowship, this friend showed me recovery at work in the lives of hundreds of addicts worldwide who had transcended cultural



and language barriers to share experience, strength, and hope.

This friend was one of the most tireless and selfless service workers I ever saw. After sharing a strong message with me, my friend traveled to jails, hospitals, rehabs, and halfway houses to share that same message with the still-suffering addict. When I was at a loss for the right words to say to a sponsee, my friend often had stories and examples of recovery that I could pass on. When I was one of the very few old-timers in my area, I could turn to my friend for assistance with old-timers' issues that no one here had experience with.

Many times, as the still-suffering addicts I work with would leave my office, I could offer them a piece of my old friend's wisdom to hold onto and carry with them. When I underwent a staggering loss in recovery, my friend did not fail to support me, when many in NA did. And because my friend was there for me with that good strong message of experience, strength, and hope; I stayed clean when all my thoughts were focused on relapse. My friend gave me many belly laughs when sharing stories that portrayed my own struggles.

My friend turned me on to celebrations of recovery that I had never heard of and didn't even know existed. My friend helped me feel a part of a larger community of recovering addicts, so that I would never be alone. My friend gave me the opportunity to share in large decisions being made by the fellowship, and told me that I was an important person today and that my opinion was respected. My friend helped me get

savvy to the folks in the rooms who are still sick and suffering, and taught me how to unconditionally love them without setting myself up to be hurt by them.

My Higher Power often reached out and spoke to me through my friend. My friend has been steadfast, tried and true, and has never failed me in my recovery, being there for me at any hour of the day or night. I do not think that you can put a price on that.

I made a long-distance phone call to my RSR today and asked him to please be an advocate for my friend, to not let him be killed over a dollar. My friend means so very much to me.

I love you, my good friend, unconditionally. I am sorry I did not express my gratitude sooner. I hope I am not too late to pray for the life of my friend, *The NA Way*.

VB, New York

## Comin'up

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### AUSTRALIA

**Western Australia:** 14-16 Mar. 1997; Western Australia Area Convention; Royal Commonwealth Society Hall, Subiaco, Perth; info: 61/9/2724508 or 61/9/3353197 or 61/9/2278361; Convention Committee, PO Box 668, Subiaco, Western Australia 6008

### CANADA

**Manitoba:** 13-15 June 1997; Winnipeg Area Convention; Broadway Community Center; Winnipeg; info: (204) 774-2440 or (204) 775-9241; WACNA, PO Box 25173, 1650 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2V 4C8

### INDIA

**West Bengal:** 10-12 Jan. 1997; 2nd Calcutta Area Convention; Kishore Bharati Krirangan, Jadavpur, Santoshpur, Calcutta; info: please address fax to Sunil J. 91/33/2454748; CACNA, 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

**Manipur:** 1-3 Mar. 1997; 1st Imphal Area Convention; Khumanlampak State Youth Center, Imphal; Anand Continental: 91/385/223422, Hotel Excellency: 91/385/225401, Hotel Prince: 91/385/224010, Hotel Imphal Ashok: 91/385/220459; info: 91/385/221615 or 91/385/222967 or 91/385/310803; NACIA, Marwri Dharamsala R No.19, Box 93, Imphal 795001, Manipur, India

### PERU

**La Libertad:** 14-16 Feb 1997; Peru Regional Convention; info: 51/9957841; NA Oficina Nacional, Casilla Postal 18-0523, Lima 18, Peru

### PHILIPPINES

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

### PORTUGAL

**Lisbon:** 6-8 Dec. 1996; NaLinha Area Convention; Escola Hoteleira de Estoril, Estoril; info: 351/1/4191601 or 351/1/4660399; CANLNA, Apartado 1118-2775, Parede, Portugal

### SWITZERLAND

**Vaud:** 21-23 Mar. 1997; 3rd Swiss Convention; Leysin; info: 41/21/6486968; CSNA3, PO Box 181, CH-1000, Lausanne 9, Switzerland

### UNITED STATES

**Alabama:** 14-17 Feb. 1997; North Alabama Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Decatur; info: (205) 351-2986; NAACNA, PO Box 2776, Decatur, AL 35602

**California:** 31 Dec. 1996; Southern California Regional New Year's Eve Bash; Orange Show, 689 South E Street, San Bernardino; info: (714) 661-3245 or (714) 669-9164



2) 31 Jan. - 2 Feb. 1997; 2nd San Fernando Valley Area Convention; Burbank Hilton; rsvns: (800) HILTONS; info: (818) 831-7084 or visit us at our web site:

www.pacificnet.net/~richmcc/na/sfv.html

3) 7-9 Feb. 1996; Central California Regional Convention; Red Lion Hotel, Bakersfield; rsvns: (800) 733-5466 or (805) 323-7111; info: (805) 486-3373 or (805) 569-9807; CCRCNA, PO Box 3908, Simi Valley, CA 93063

4) 7-9 Mar. 1997; Southern California Regional Assembly Weekend; info: (310) 396-4812; Let Your Voice Be Heard, 1935 S. Myrtle Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016

5) 28-30 Mar. 1997; Southern California Region Spring Gathering; Doubletree LAX Hotel; rsvns: (800) 222-8733; info: (714) 638-5898 or (714) 639-1022; Spring Gathering, PO Box 7825, Torrance, CA 90504

6) 3-6 Apr. 1997; Northern California Regional Convention; Bill Graham Convention Center, San Francisco; Quality Hotel, rsvns: (415) 776-8200; Holiday Inn, rsvns: (415) 441-4000; info: (707) 453-0868 or (707) 447-5641; NCCNA, PO Box 840, Fairfield, CA 94533

7) 30 May - 1 June 1997; In Pursuit of Unity Campout; Marysville Riverfront Park, Marysville; info: (916) 742-5167; e-mail: mleahy@syix.com

**Connecticut:** 4-6 Apr. 1997; United Shoreline Area Convention; Best Western, Mystic; rsvns: (800) 363-1622 or (860) 536-4281; info: (860) 886-7512 or (860) 437-7229; USANA, PO Box 323, Norwich, CT 06360

**Florida:** 28-30 Mar. 1997; Florida Spring Service Break; Radisson Adventura Beach Resort; North Miami Beach; rsvns: (305) 932-2233; info: (305) 270-0030; FSSBNA, 7812 SW 103rd Place, Miami, FL 33173

2) 3-5 Oct. 1997; Uncoast Area Convention; Holiday Inn Sunspree, Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (904) 462-0799 or (352) 338-7929 or (352) 371-7918; UCACNA, PO Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

**Georgia:** 10-12 Jan. 1997; Central Savannah River Area Convention; Sheraton Augusta; rsvns: (800) 325-3535; info: (706) 733-2383; Peace in Recovery 9, PO Box 15863, Augusta, GA 30919

2) 13-15 Feb. 1997; Georgia Regional Convention; Jekyll Island Convention Center; Days Inn: (912) 635-3319; Ramada Inn: (800) 835-2110; info: (912) 953-7906 or (770) 229-8963; GRCNA, PO Box 2478, Decatur, GA 30031

**Idaho:** 28-30 Mar. 1997; Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Weston Plaza, Twin Falls; rsvns: (208) 733-0650; info: (208) 733-7031; SIRC, 616 Blue Lakes Blvd. North, Box 177, Twin Falls, ID 83301

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

**Indiana:** 14-17 Mar. 1997; Indiana State Convention; Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza; Merrillville; rsvns: (800) 333-3333; info: ISNAC, PO Box M-609, Gary, IN 46401-0609

**Iowa:** 4-6 July 1997; Iowa Regional Convention; Best Western, Clearlake; rsvns: (515) 357-5253; info: (515) 424-5042 or (515) 423-6107; IRCNA, PO Box 53, Mason City, IA 50402

**Kansas:** 30 Dec. 1996 - 1 Jan. 1997; United Kansas City Area New Year's Eve Convention; Lenexa Holiday Inn, Lenexa; info: (816) 363-5368

2) 4-7 Apr. 1997; Mid-America Regional Convention; Dodge House, Dodge City; rsvns: (316) 225-9900; info: (913) 825-8163 or (316) 662-7491 or (316) 623-2054; MARCNA, PO Box 2341, Hutchinson, KS 67504

3) 18-20 Apr. 1997; MoKan Area Convention; Mount Convention Center, Atchison; info: (913) 367-3610; e-mail: Mhansen272@aol.com; MKACNA, 714 N 3rd Street, Atchison, KS 66002

**Kentucky:** 14 Dec. 1996; Clean and Serene Group 12th Anniversary; National Guard Armory, 1800 Clark Street, Paducah; info: (502) 443-5874 or (502) 554-4439

2) 16-18 Jan. 1997; Louisville Area Convention; info: (812) 280-0523

3) 28-30 Mar. 1997; Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Owensboro; info: KRCNA, PO Box 126, Robards, KY 42452

**Maryland:** 4-6 Apr. 1997; Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; info: (202) 362-4525

**Massachusetts:** 7-9 Mar. 1997; New England Regional Convention; Westin, Waltham; rsvns: (800) 228-3000 or (617) 290-5600; info: (508) 975-3057; e-mail: JDEdmo@aol.com or rahvan@aol.com; NERC-7, 733 Turnpike Street, Box 145, North Andover, MA 01845

**Michigan:** 27-29 Mar. 1997; Detroit Area Convention; Westin Hotel, Detroit; rsvns: (800) 228-3000 or (313) 568-8200; info: (313) 527-8684 or (313) 925-4613 or (810) 543-7200; DACNA, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

**Minnesota:** 25-27 Apr. 1997; Minnesota Regional Convention; Best Western Kelly Inn, St. Cloud; rsvns: (320) 253-0606; info: (320) 240-0487 or (612) 263-1595; web site: www.cyberx.com/mnevents.html; MNNAC, PO Box 171, St. Cloud, MN 56301

**Missouri:** 14-16 Feb. 1997; Cabin Fever Prevention Convention; Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake of the Ozarks; info: (573) 446-6800

2) 6-8 June 1997; 12th Show-Me Regional Convention; Hilton Airport Hotel, Kansas City; rsvns: (816) 891-8900; info: (913) 384-0772 or (816) 363-5368; e-mail: woodyd@sound.net

**New Jersey:** 23-25 May 1997; New Jersey Regional Convention; Cherry Hill Hilton; rsvns: (609) 665-6666; info: (908) 826-2148; NJRCNA, PO Box 605, Englishtown, NJ 07726

**North Carolina:** 3-5 Jan. 1997; Western North Carolina Area Convention; Holiday Inn West Holidome, Asheville; info: (704) 298-9562

**Ohio:** 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

2) 28 Feb. - 2 Mar. 1997; Toledo Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Toledo; rsvns: (419) 241-3000; info: (419) 474-2714 or (419) 534-2142; TACNA, PO Box 20018, Toledo, OH 43610

**Oregon:** 10-12 Jan. 1997; Mid-Willamette Valley Area Convention; Shilo Inn, Newport; info: (503) 390-5872 or (503) 463-6350; MWVACNA, PO Box 13232, Salem, OR 97309

2) 14-16 Mar. 1997; Western States Literature Conference; Holiday Inn Portland Airport; rsvns: (503) 256-5000; info: (503) 224-8345; Lit Conference, PO Box 90415, Portland, OR 97290

**Texas:** 7-9 Mar. 1997; Rio Grande Regional Convention; El Paso Hilton; rsvns: (800) 445-8667 or (915) 778-4241; info: (915) 833-0012 or (915) 562-4654 or (915) 594-0417; RGRCA, PO Box 31563, El Paso, TX 79931

2) 28-30 Mar. 1997; Lone Star Regional Convention; Harvey Hotel D/FW, Irving; rsvns: (972) 929-4500; info: (972) 245-8972 or (800) 747-8972; Lone Star RSO, 1510 Randolph #205, Carrollton, TX 75006

**Virginia:** 3-5 Jan. 1997; 15th Annual Virginia Convention; The Cavalier, Virginia Beach; rsvns: (800) 446-8199; info: (804) 436-5776; (804) 467-4714; AVCNA, PO Box 64918, Virginia Beach, VA 23467-4918

**Wisconsin:** 10-12 Jan. 1997; Greater Milwaukee Unity Convention; Ramada Inn Airport, Milwaukee; info: (414) 672-4191



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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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