

*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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The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the NA Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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From the editor



Last month I reported in some detail about the proposal for a new *NA Way Magazine*, which will be presented by the World Service Office Board of Directors at this year's World Service Conference. If you missed the January issue and would like a copy, please request one from the WSO. You can also receive a copy of the *Conference Agenda Report* on request.

Several people have asked me about receiving refunds on the unused portion of their subscriptions if the proposal for a new *NA Way* is approved by the fellowship. Several readers have also expressed a desire to donate the refund due them to world services.

In response to these questions, we are developing a method by which subscribers can choose to receive refunds or donate. We haven't worked out the details yet, but are providing this information in response to questions and concerns you may have about renewing your subscription.

Another concern that has arisen is the length of time we require to publish an upcoming event in "Comin' Up." The new *NA Way* (again, if the proposal is approved by the fellowship) will have a calendar section, but because the publication comes out quarterly, we will need much more

notice to publish events than the two-and-a-half months now required. The *WSO Newslines* requires six months notice for publication. It is likely the new *NA Way* will have a similar requirement.

Then there are manuscripts. In addition to the types of articles that are now featured in the "Meeting in Print" section, the new *NA Way* will accept feature articles, trusted servant recognition articles, and other types of stories. The question is: What do we do with the manuscripts that have been submitted to the *NA Way* as it is now? Our inclination is to keep them and "roll them over" to the new publication stream (again, if the proposal for a new *NA Way* is approved).

We'd like to hear what you think about these issues, and we'd like to encourage you to participate in discussions that will be held about the *CAR* in your groups, areas, and regions. *NA* needs the voices of all its members, rising in the spirit of our Second Tradition, to make decisions that truly reflect that tradition.

Cindy T, Editor

Grieving with grace

One of my greatest challenges in recovery has been coping with feelings. Learning to identify them has helped. Still, the more powerful and uncomfortable feelings (especially anger and grief) stir in me a response that for years I interpreted as "feeling crazy." My years of using taught me that I could/should "do something" about these powerful feelings, and that it's difficult and unfamiliar to just *feel* the feelings and let them be.

Of the two most powerful and uncomfortable feelings, grief has been by far the hardest to weather. Anger *feels* good, in its own peculiar way, with its clear focus and brief duration. Grief feels alarmingly like self-pity, and some days it seems like it will never end.

We all experience grief of some magnitude, especially in early recovery when we're faced with the loss of our drugs, our lifestyles, and our using "friends." I thought that grief was a powerful experience. It didn't begin to compare to the experience of suddenly losing someone close to me.

I learned about overpowering grief several months before my third *NA* birthday, when I came home to my

apartment early on Christmas Day to find a phone message from my mother. My father had died quite suddenly that morning. Now, you have to understand that I wasn't fond of my father. All during my childhood he methodically abused and terrorized me. I always thought I'd be glad when he died, so I wasn't prepared for the depth of grief I experienced.

I spent several days in total insanity. At one point I went so far over the edge that I picked up a kitchen chair and threw it against the wall over and over, until it was in splinters. I remember one fleeting glimpse of sanity when I marveled at my ability to experience and withstand so much pain. Mostly, I just didn't think I would survive.

My sponsees saved me that time. They came to my apartment, fed me, dressed me, took me to meetings, and sat with me until sanity began to return. I survived, didn't use, and was even more impressed with the miracle of recovery and the love of the fellowship.

Just recently, seven years after my father's death, life served up another unexpected and devastating loss. My very special cat, who found me in a halfway house eleven years ago and has been my constant companion ever since, died very suddenly. He showed no sign of being ill until an hour before his death. I was heartbroken, and found myself missing his company a hundred times a day.

I was able to weep freely and openly for as long as I needed to, and I made up a small ritual for letting go and saying good-bye as we buried his body. I talked to friends and my part-

ner. I did all the "healthy" things to experience and honor my grief. Yet a week later I found myself having crazy and frightening thoughts. I started being fearful and even acting out my insanity. In my panic and despair, I understood that something very important to me had been ripped away without warning and without my permission; the universe was not a safe place anymore.

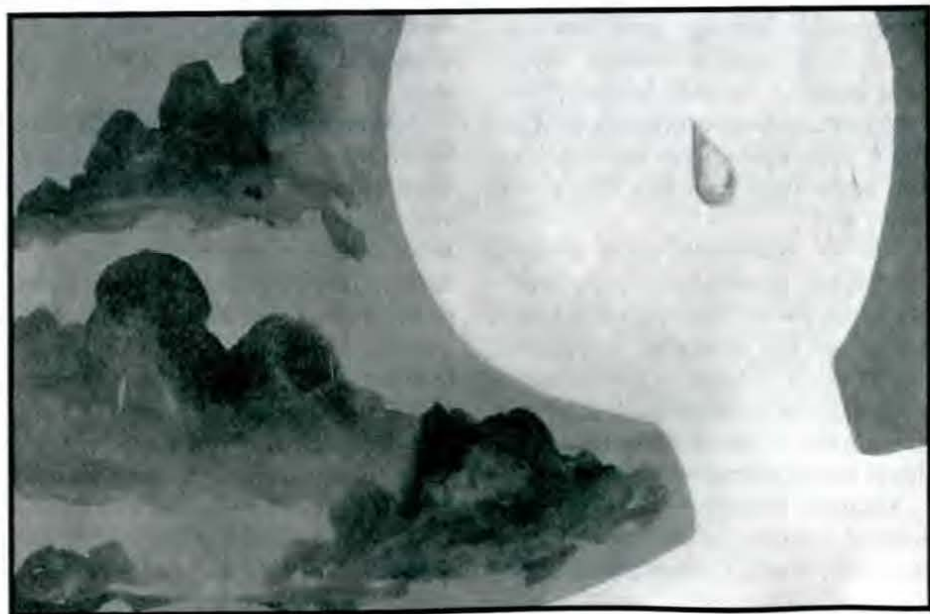
I do stupid things when I act out my insanity, and while I didn't use, I got crazy enough to scare myself. I finally reached a more rational state one day on a long drive. I was examining the crazy thoughts and realized that my brain had been trying to make sense of my loss, struggling against my powerlessness. The very next thought in my head was, "Guess I'll just have to trust God."

What a concept! It was the logical next step (to admit my powerlessness,

be restored to sanity, turn over my will and my life . . .). And with that, a glimmer of peace returned to my heart, a quiet peace that lived alongside the grief, growing as my sadness subsided.

It's been just over three weeks now that my cat has been gone. I still miss him a hundred times a day. And I've been able to acknowledge that the universe is *not* an inherently safe place; life still goes on, complete with joy and sadness. But I've reconfirmed my understanding that I have a Higher Power who loves me deeply. I've gained a little more insight into applying the principles of the steps in my life, particularly in understanding how "powerlessness" is part of the grieving process. And I am even more confident that, no matter what life on Planet Earth dishes out, I will be able to walk through it, by grace.

Anonymous



Staying clean through grief and loss

Today is Friday, two weeks after my mother's death. She passed away at 2:05 a.m., 8 October. This is one of the saddest times of my life.

I got a call at 11:30 in the morning on Friday while I was at work. It was my wife. She said that I might want to go see my mom in Shelbyville, so I hurried up and cleaned up at work and I took off immediately. I didn't even stop to cash my paycheck or get gas. I felt something urging me not to waste time getting there. I cried most of the way there. I had this weird feeling that I would not make it there in time to see my mom alive; but my God was with me all the way there, and again on my way back to my house four days later.

I got to my mom's house in about forty-five minutes. When I got there I walked straight into the house, not knowing what I would run into. It was so gloomy at the house that day. Everyone looked a bit confused. My sister Carmella was there with her two girlfriends, and my dad was there, too.

I walked into my mom's room by myself. I just freaked. I couldn't believe what I saw. It was just like the doctors had said—Mom would go into a coma and die in the coma. Mom was in a coma and chanting what doctors say is the death moan. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I started to cry.

"Mom, what's going on?" I gasped. I bent over the bed to hug and hold onto her, but she couldn't respond. Then I felt someone grab me by the shoulder and pull me close, calming me down a little. It was Jim, my brother-in-law.

Then my sister came in and I said, "Carmella, we've got to call an ambulance." She said, "No, Kalman, we are not supposed to do that. The doctor said no." I remember going into the living room for a while and then going back into my mom's room, talking to her, telling her over and over how much I loved her. I kept going in and out of the room and checking on her. I went in once and asked her if she was a little warm, and I uncovered her little feet and kept saying, "I love you, Mom."

My sister and her friends went to get something to eat. Jim left, too, so my dad and I were the only ones there. We were waiting for the nurses to get there. At two o'clock they pulled into the driveway. I was so glad to see them; they were like angels from heaven.

One nurse I recognized from a while back; I went to school with her boy Ron and the family at St. Joseph School. She had a really kind heart and a nice smile. She knew who I was, and she knew Mom was sick, so the

nurses and I went into the bedroom. We were standing by my mom in the bed, and they were taking Mom's blood pressure when the nurse looked at me said, "Your mother is dying."

I thought to myself, "I know that," but she said again, "No, your mom is dying now." I looked down and my mom was very calm and had a peaceful look about her, and she had stopped moaning. She had a look on her face like she was going home with God; and my mother died at that moment without a word or a cry. It was the most precious time of my life to spend those last few moments with my mom before she passed away. It's almost as if she waited for me to get home so we could see each other, and so I could tell her that I really loved her and that she was the best mother a man could ask for. I hope that she could sense in my voice all that I felt. Now God will take care of her in heaven.

I was devastated. I was lost. I hurt. I was confused. I didn't know what to do or how to act. My dad was crying. We were crying out loud in pain, but I thank God the nurses were there for guidance. About ten minutes after my mom passed, my sister pulled into the driveway with her friend. Jim was already there, and I went out of the house and told her Mom had died. She lost it. It was such a shock to her. She was upset because she wasn't there at the time Mom had passed.

It wasn't long before it seemed like everyone was there in the front yard, hugging and crying and just being sad. I'll never forget that day as long as I live, and I thank God for the

memories of the time before she died. Here it is, two weeks later, and I still miss and love her just like always, but now I miss her even more and still love her. I feel closer to her now and I talk to her more often.

Today I have mixed feelings about life and death. I've learned a lot about myself. I've found out that I do have true feelings about other people. I don't show it all the time, but it sure is nice to be clean and to be human, to have joy and sadness in my heart, just to a part of God's creation. I'm still confused, angry, lost for words at times, but I'm still clean and in the hands of God at this moment.

Thank you, NA, and all the people who supported me at this time of my life when I'm desperate for my recovery and desperate to stay clean through everything. I would have never made it through this clean if it hadn't been for the support of NA. I celebrated nine years clean on 6 October, two days before my mother died, and I was able to share my recovery with my mom. As sick and confused as she was, she was able to say, "That's good." That's all I needed to hear.

I went to a meeting last night and to a lot of other meetings in the last two weeks. I needed them even though I didn't feel like going. I went with support from family and NA friends who say every time they see me, "Keep coming back; we love you." At the meeting last night, my sponsor asked me if I had thought about writing. I said yes, but I hadn't gotten around to it. It took that little kick in the butt to get me to do it. That's how



it works in recovery: I do a lot of thinking about it, but I don't get around to doing it until I'm hurting and someone suggests working the steps.

Recovery in NA is beautiful. I haven't had to use over my grief. I can remember everything that went on. I have special memories of my mom. Just to be clean and to try to be productive after a crisis like this is a miracle. I'm doing all the things I should do to take care of myself and to stay clean. I'm grateful for my wife and two boys and the love we share in our home.

I'm reading *It Works: How and Why*. It's the greatest book, full of knowledge, and has so much wisdom about how to recover from the disease of addiction, how to avoid acting on my obsession to feel better. I need God and people in my life. I need spiritual principles and steps to work so that I can feel whole again and live

in the here and now, without thinking and obsessing about something to make it all go away.

I'm sitting here at work; it's one o'clock and I leave at two-thirty, so I've made it this far and haven't used. That's a miracle. This is what is on my mind today. I feel good at this moment and as long as I do what I've been doing since I've been clean, I'll stay clean today. I need to stay focused on today. I need to live just for today, with God, NA, and all the love and support from everyone. I thank God for the time and mind to be able to write; there is a sense of calm in writing. I have some self-acceptance in my life today.

I thank God for the experience he has shown me and for guiding me through this stuff called "life on life's terms." With Mom gone, I need my family more than ever. I pray that we can all work together and love together in times of need.

KV, Indiana

No longer helpless

I was at a meeting the night before last and we discussed the chapter in our Basic Text entitled "Why Are We Here?" I was reminded of an experience I had two years before coming to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting that defines why I am here.

I was in a long-term residential treatment facility in my hometown. It had practically been a family tradition to seek treatment there. My sister had gone there first to stop using heroin, and later my brother had been sent there as a condition of sentencing on felony drug charges. I had gone there in utter desperation, thinking of treatment there as a last resort.

After a month or two in treatment I ended up on the hot seat in one of those marathon groups, with staff and other residents battering away at my defenses. I don't recall much from that session, but I do remember the outcome. It was this: that I was sharing at a meeting two days before. I sat there in tears and I remember saying, "I feel helpless"—and meaning it.

After years of trying to somehow manipulate my using and my environment in order to feel good, I had lost any hope of ever succeeding at that.

At a gut level, I knew I was not going to win. But soon after that marathon group, I left the treatment program and returned to using, becoming crazier and more desperate over the next two years.

When I arrived at my first NA meeting I was nervous, but when I looked around the room, it was clear that it was filled with the kind of folks I had been hanging around with for years. The language and the clothes and the experiences were familiar to me. When the literature was read, I was able to relate to what it said. I didn't understand what Narcotics Anonymous was, but it felt right, and I no longer felt helpless.

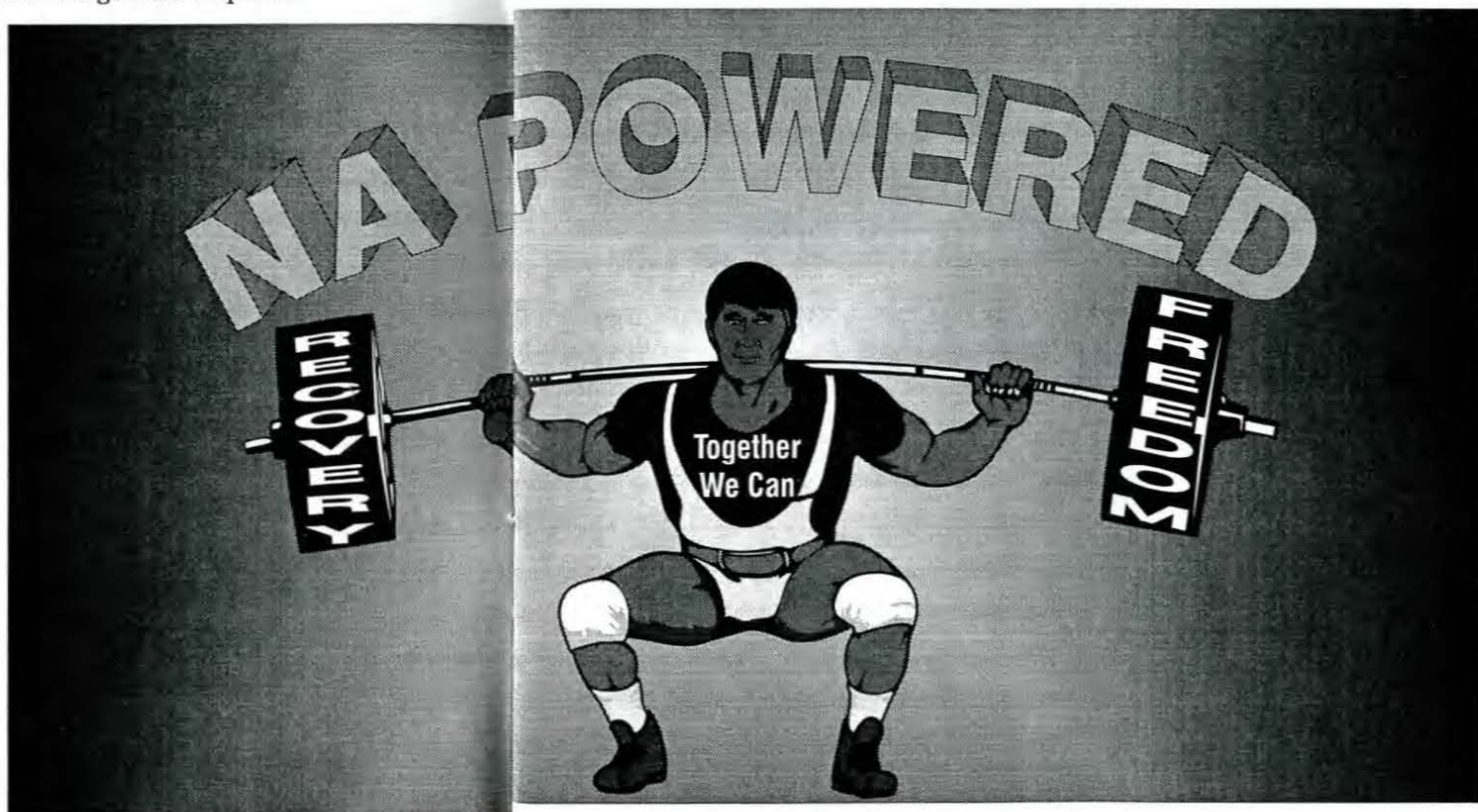
There were things I could do, like working the steps and coming to meetings. There were people I could talk to, there was service work to be done, there were old ways of acting to be changed. There was a book, our Basic Text, to provide me with the guidance of those who had come before. There were people willing to sponsor me when I asked.

After years of looking for some solution that would relieve the pain of living, I felt I had found one. I was able to take action and to change those things that I could. That's why I am still here nine years later. I still believe that the NA program is my solution.

A popular word these days is "empowered." I feel empowered by the Narcotics Anonymous program to make different choices and to live without the use of drugs. I still recognize the value of NA in my life and so I continue to attend meetings, do service, and apply the principles of the Narcotics Anonymous program in my life.

It had been many years since I had thought about that marathon group where I felt so helpless. I was reminded of how Narcotics Anonymous lifted me out of that helplessness, and of how much hope I found at my first NA meeting.

Anonymous



On stereotypes and open-mindedness

I am a health care professional and have been licensed to practice nursing for twenty-six years. I have held nursing licenses in three states. I am also a recovering addict who is now enjoying my seven-and-a-half years clean. I am only one of many nurses in the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. I choose to remain anonymous for several reasons, one being the threat of exposure in the medical community and possibility of licensing, professional, and employment difficulties. This prejudice, unfortunately, still exists. Anonymity is also a spiritual principle of Narcotics Anonymous.

Twenty-two years ago I had the perfect opportunity to stop using drugs. My husband and most of my friends quit using after we all met an Indian guru and started practicing meditation. Everyone quit using except me. I felt as if there was something seriously wrong with me. I just couldn't stop getting high. On the outside I appeared to be functioning, doing my job well, and to my knowledge no one at work knew I was a

substance abuser. I used against my own will for fifteen more years, lying, cheating, fighting, stealing, and abusing those I loved the most—my family.

In 1986, several weeks before I reached an emotional and spiritual bottom, I read a public service notice for Narcotics Anonymous meetings in our local newspaper. At first I was hesitant. I imagined everyone attending an NA meeting being male, looking like the Blues Brothers, and being strung out on Meperidine. My imaginings were wrong on all three counts.

In Narcotics Anonymous I have learned the most simple lesson: how to stop using, just for today. I learned how not to use and how to continue my abstinence and recover from this disease. I learned all of this from other addicts in recovery. The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. When I spoke, they listened; when they spoke, I learned to listen. They loved me and taught me how to love myself. Most importantly, I learned how not to use drugs, no matter what.

Anonymous

At a crossroads in my recovery

Hi. I'm Greg, and I'm an addict.

I'm writing mostly to share my experience, strength, and hope. I, like most of us, started my drug use very young, at age twelve or thirteen. By age seventeen, I was using every day. From age eighteen to thirty I traveled the country using, working, and selling drugs. At age thirty-one I went to a federal prison for two-and-a-half years for selling drugs. I continued using throughout my incarceration.

Now comes the positive part of my story. About three months prior to my release, I stopped using because I was afraid they would catch me and not let me out. Upon release, I got parole, a condition of which was that I go to NA meetings. I had friends in Los Angeles who had gotten clean in NA and were also hard-core users. This proved to me that NA worked.

I started going to meetings. I went to five or six a week instead of my required two. And for the first time in my life I was happy without using drugs. I started doing NA service work and chairing meetings.

I had fourteen months clean when I decided to try some social drinking. I was in a blackout within two hours. I went on a two-day binge, woke up, called my sponsor, and went and told my home group what had happened. Through God's grace, NA's understanding, and my own willingness, I got clean again. And I have been clean now for three-and-a-half years.

As I look back, I feel the first flaw in my program was my not calling my sponsor for the first fourteen months. I can't blame it on not going to meetings because I was going to meetings regularly at the time of my relapse. After my relapse, I got another sponsor with whom I felt more in sync. My new sponsor and I became best friends, sharing every aspect of our lives.

Two years ago, on the Friday of Labor Day weekend, my mother died. It left me devastated. NA, my wife, and my sponsor stood by me like a rock.

Last week, on the Friday of Labor Day weekend, my best friend and sponsor, Scott, got killed at a county crossroads intersection. Someone had removed a stop sign on the highway and thrown it in a ditch.

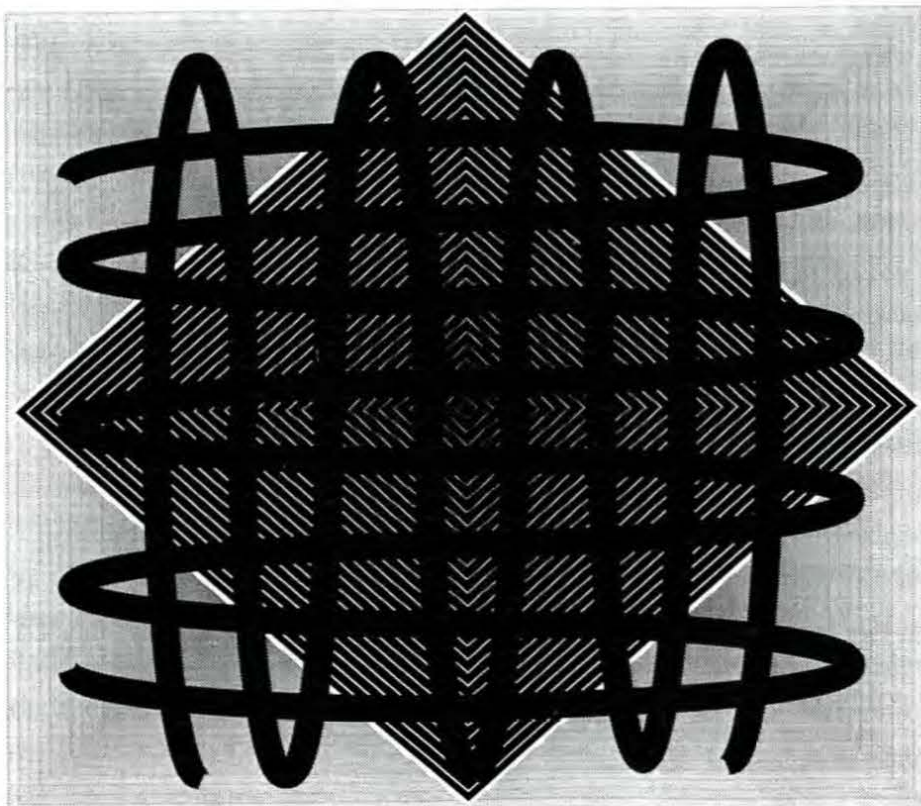
With honor, I led Scott's funeral procession on a Harley-Davidson that Scott had built. It was a very sad day. But today I've seen all my dreams come true, be they emotional, financial, or spiritual. I'm usually very, very grateful. I'm newly married to an unselfish, loving woman. I have prospered financially. I give NA and God most of the credit for these things.

Today I'm at a crossroads in my recovery. My sponsor would say to me about my mother's death, "It's all about living life on life's terms, Greg." And today I'm following his advice in dealing with his death. Today my wife and I, along with every other NA member in town, are trying to help Scott's family. The love and support Scott's wife has received is nothing short of awesome. I still have a lot of strength today through the abundance God has given me, and through the support of my NA family and my wife.

I have hope that Scott's family will recover from this tragedy. And I have faith that Scott will carry a positive message to me through his spirit in how to deal with his loss.

In closing, I want to say to the newcomer: Keep coming back. If I can stay clean, anyone can. And remember, sponsorship is a key ingredient in this program. And to everyone, maybe you should call your sponsor today and thank him or her for the time, love, understanding, and support.

GS, South Dakota



Recovery for me

Today is my son's birthday. He was eleven years old when his dad took him out of state to live with him. I grieve over my loss but understand that I was destined to have this situation happen in my life, and I blame myself less and less.

As I look back over my family and know that both grandfathers were alcoholic and that my father was also a drug addict, I realize I had no personal choice about the disease of addiction. It would have its way with me, and take my life and everything I held near and dear down with it. Thanks to the Fellowship of NA, I found a way out.

I had hoped my son would come back to live with me, but today he is twenty-five years old and those wishful days have passed. He has his own life now and continues to live out of state, within the reach of his dad and family. As much as I wanted this program to be a part of his life too, I have been the taker. There were expectations all along that I would eventually regain my rightful place as a full-time and complete mom for this young man, but it never happened, even

though I have maintained clean time and worked the program with my heart and soul.

This program was meant for me alone, and I am finally able to be grateful that the God of my understanding loved me enough to bring me to recovery. Through the loving Fellowship of NA, I am grateful that for today I can stay clean for me—because I am worth it!

Anonymous



Pedal!

I used to think of God as my observer and my judge. He kept track of the things I did wrong so that He would know whether I merited heaven or hell when I died. He was out there sort of like a United States president. I recognized his picture when I saw it, but I didn't really know Him.

But later on when I met God, it seemed as though life was rather like a bike—but it was a tandem bike, and God was in the back, helping me pedal. I don't know when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since I took the back seat. God makes life exciting. When I thought I was in control, I thought I knew the way. It was a rather tedious life, but it was predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when God took the lead, oh! He knew about delightful long cuts up mountains, through rocky places, at breakneck speeds. Even though it often looked like madness, He said, "Pedal!" I was worried and anxious and asked, "Where are You taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer, and I started to learn to trust. I entered into an adventure, trying to forget about my addiction in life. And

when I'd say, "I'm scared!" God would lean back and touch my hand.

He brought me to people who had gifts for me; gifts I needed; gifts of healing, acceptance, love, and joy. They gave me these gifts to take on my journey, our journey, my God's and mine. He said to give the gifts away. So I did, to the people we met, and discovered that no matter how much I gave away, I kept getting more.

I didn't trust God with our journey at first. I didn't want Him in total control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it, but He knows secrets about how to ride through life. He knows how to bend to go around sharp corners, how to jump over rocks, how to fly to shorten scary passages. And I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, God.

And when I'm sure I can't do any more, when I want to quit, to give up, He just smiles and says, "Pedal!"

Anonymous

Tenth Step Match

Match the following words to their definitions.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Willingness | Training one's conduct for personal improvement |
| Self-examination | To make acknowledgment |
| Self-discipline | Taking action in the Tenth Step |
| Admit | Conscious or perceptive |
| Aware | Eagerly taking action to work the steps |
| Today | To carry further in time |
| Program | Making the effort to hear |
| Listen | Refrain from lying, cheating, stealing |
| Honesty | Relating to the present time |
| Continue | The Twelve Steps of NA |
| Expectations | Inappropriate or improper |
| Inventory | Premeditated resentments |
| Freedom | An accounting of something |
| Promptly | The capacity to exercise choice |
| Wrong | Done without delay |

*Thanks to The Recoverer,
the Washington/Northern Idaho Regional Newsletter*

Home Group



Newsletters



A decision

**From *Inside Connection*,
the American River,
California, area newsletter**

I remember sitting in my car for fifteen minutes before going in. My heart was pounding, and I wasn't breathing very well. My head was spinning with thoughts and fears I couldn't control. "Maybe this is the wrong meeting. What if there's no place to sit? What will I do if someone talks to me? What if? What if?"

The people were starting to huddle in groups just outside the entrance. I began to question whether I even had a problem. Did I really need to be there? Perhaps if I watched these people long enough, I could spot the differences between me and them. Then I wouldn't need to go inside.

A few deep breaths, a feeble attempt at mustering up some courage, and I was out of my car. With my head down, I quickly crossed the street, heading for the door. Maybe they wouldn't notice me if I didn't look up.

I slipped past the crowd and into the meeting room. I remember how bright the lights were. The smell of freshly brewed coffee hit me; it was an unusually soothing smell, very friendly somehow. Everyone was moving around with what seemed like purpose. Hugging, smiling, and doing their "chores." They all seemed to know one another. All of a sudden I felt very alone. I noticed a man who was carefully arranging literature on the counter. A big smile came across his face as I stopped to look over the pamphlets. "They're free for the taking, just help yourself," he said. He was just too friendly, I thought. Maybe he was on something...

The room began to fill quickly. I started to feel sick to my stomach. I spotted a seat in the back row. Yeah, nice and quiet back there. No one would see me or ask me to talk. The chair was cold and hard. I couldn't seem to find a comfortable position. I began to squirm. I couldn't believe how many people were there, all flowing into the room, chattering amongst themselves, laughing, sharing. Soon all the seats were taken, and people began to sit on the floor, and on the stairs, and to stand against the wall.

The meeting started. They asked who was there for their first meeting. I was too frightened to raise my hand.

I struggled to concentrate on the words they were reading. I remember how disappointed I was that there was "God" written throughout the readings. (I wasn't ready yet for "the God of our understanding.") The people were so much different from me. They dressed differently, talked differently, and didn't use drugs. How could I possibly belong? I decided to stay anyway. Besides, I wasn't brave enough to walk out in front of everyone.

There was a man who seemed to be in charge. He sat at a table up front. He seemed so happy to be there. He read some announcements, and introduced those who were celebrating clean-time birthdays. Okay, I was curious now . . .

He then turned the meeting over to a woman who began to tell her story, talking about using, how she found NA, and how she lived her life today. I listened closely, looking for the differences. I so desperately wanted to leave the meeting, totally assured that I was different and didn't belong there. No such luck! She spoke about the insanity, the obsession, and the all-consuming feeling that she couldn't live without being high. I listened, and I related. I stumbled through my own memories as she spoke, and relived my own feelings, which were evoked by her words. She touched me so deeply that I wanted to cry.

When the meeting opened up, a man shared, "One is too many and a thousand never enough." How did he know? The room was filled with people who had something powerful to say that night. They shared how

they had changed, and how they lived their lives without the use of drugs. They also talked about dependence on a loving "Higher Power." Some spoke about their hopes and dreams for the future, which could come true as long as they "got out of the way" and "didn't put anything in." I couldn't begin to understand a great deal of what they said. I actually strained my brain trying to intellectualize their words. But the underlying message was clear: I didn't have to live this way anymore, and if I was done, I didn't have to use, ever again.

I left the meeting feeling let down. I had gone there that night hoping to discover that I wasn't an addict after all. But my discovery was clear. I belonged there. I was so tired of my life as it was. Maybe they would share more of this stuff with me. Maybe they would even share how I could change my life, too, and learn to live clean. I began to feel hope. "Keep coming back!" they said. It was that simple. That night I made a decision that would change my life forever: I decided to go to another meeting.

JP

Leadership in NA? Of course!

**From *Portland Reach*,
the Portland, Oregon,
area newsletter**

Our Second Tradition states, "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."

We read it at some point during every meeting, but what does it mean? Too often, it seems, it is heard instead as "we have no leaders."

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our fellowship could not survive without strong leadership, and most of our current problems stem from a lack of leadership. In my opinion, at the heart of the Second Tradition is the separation of leadership and authority. These two words are too often thought of in our fellowship as synonyms. Our Second Tradition states that we have one primary source of authority, and many leaders who draw on that authority through the process of group conscience.

Our true leaders (who are defined by their actions, not necessarily their positions or titles) are diligent servants of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The leaders of our fellowship are the voices of wisdom and experience heard in our meetings. The leaders of our fellowship are the sponsors who make themselves available to serve God by helping to carry the message of our program to those with the desire to hear it. Leadership is having the courage to say, "Work the steps or die!"

Most importantly, a leader must have an honest desire to do the will of our Higher Power. Without God's will at the heart of a leader's actions, that person will have no authority in our fellowship. To truly form a group conscience, a group of NA members must come together with one ultimate goal in heart and mind: to seek and carry out the will of our fellowship's Higher Power.

All too often, more personal opinion and personality are heard at our business meetings than is the voice of a Higher Power. God's direction is available to our program, but it is the responsibility of our members to seek it. To seek the will of a loving God takes open-mindedness. It takes a stronger ability to listen than to speak. God may express Himself through any one of us at any given time. Today it might not be me who is in a position to carry out the will of our Higher Power. If today God has chosen you to carry this message, what kind of a leader would I be if I didn't listen to you? In NA, I would be no leader at all. I stop being a leader the minute I stop listening for a

Without true leadership in NA, our service structure is reduced to petty bickering over ego, self-interest, personal opinion, and meaningless issues, and we will be doomed to the continuous reinvention of the proverbial wheel. God must have better in store for us than that.

God, please give me the humility to honestly seek Your will for the Fellowship of NA.

Viewpoint



A growing understanding

Despite my suspicions, I cleaned up the wreckage of my past. I worked the steps to the best of my ability. I helped those who wanted my help and kept on coming back.

The word "God" offended me in the beginning, but today I have a relationship with a God of my understanding. I would have liked to remove God from the steps and traditions when I was new, but not now. I guess I've changed, not God.

GM, Canada

Membership and service

The following two articles focus on the personal responsibility of NA members. One points out that, truly, the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. The other takes our Third Tradition for granted—of course membership has nothing to do with how someone talks in a meeting—but questions how that very issue might be cause for concern when selecting people to represent our fellowship. We hope you find these articles thought-provoking. —Ed.

Electing a good example

Occasionally I find myself in a room full of addicts talking “recovery-speak,” and my head does a busy quality-control inventory on their language.

Phrases such as “clean and sober,” “drugs and alcohol,” and the infamous “addict/alcoholic” come leaping out of people’s mouths like a fire alarm ringing in a dynamite factory.

Although my brain recognizes the redundancy of what is being said, my mouth tends to feel compelled to

straighten out the people who are spouting these mixed messages. Alas, after many years of hearing these voices, my heart has finally accepted that we all do the best we can and it isn’t my job to ensure that everyone in NA is speaking the literal textbook recovery language. Still . . .

There are many places where our language must remain pure and our message must be delivered clearly—in particular, in dealing with people in the public arena, such as professionals, the media, and those who have no knowledge of who we are. We are responsible to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole to convey our message precisely. Mixed messages result in addicts dying—period.

In choosing the people we send to represent Narcotics Anonymous to the public, it is very important that we ask them one very basic question: Do you carry a clear Narcotics Anonymous message?

Recently I asked this question of someone who was running for a position which involved direct responsibility in representing our fellowship to people who either knew nothing about us, or who had a lot of misconceptions about who we are. Here’s the answer I received: “NA is just an offshoot of AA; they deal with alcohol, we deal with narcotics.” This came from one of those folks who identify themselves as “clean and sober.” What is the message here?

The one difference in the two programs that I feel is most important is this: Our program deals with addiction, which is a state of being; the other program deals with a particular substance. If Narcotics Anonymous

wanted to change its First Step to read: “We admitted we were powerless over narcotics, that our lives had become unmanageable,” then we would indeed be just like the other fellowship. The fact remains, however, that we recognized over forty years ago that if we focused on a particular substance, we would acknowledge a symptom of the disease rather than the disease itself. Addicts understood narcotics to be their answer to the problem, not the origin of the problem. This is significantly different.

I’m sure the arguments over semantics will continue for years to come. I’m sure also that both fellowships understand that the same Higher Power is the answer to our problems, no matter where we drink our coffee. God belongs to all of us.

There remain two distinct and different fellowships of human beings, each with its own opinions and loyalties. The issue of representing either fellowship should be as non-negotiable as the traditions that keep our doors open. Our ability to find recovery would soon vanish if left to the whims of the personalities who represent us. It’s ironic that the traditions of NA and AA read in such a similar manner, because it is the traditions themselves that tell us we are bound to remain different programs.

When someone has referred to himself or herself as an addict/alcoholic, does this mean that he or she belongs to two different programs, or identifies as having two different problems? Our literature tells us that “alcohol is a drug,” so do we need to distinguish between it and other

drugs when speaking of our personal relationship with it?

It remains a point of acceptance for me that when addicts feel the need to call themselves addict/alcoholics, junkies, speedfreaks, dirty dope fiends, or whatever, I silently listen to what they have to say *next*. But I remain adamant about sending these same people into places where what they have to say will be construed as representative of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. I wouldn’t want the public to think that any of this is the philosophy of NA.

If the addicts who are reading this wonder what all this has to do with you, consider this: It takes a group conscience to put addicts into positions where they are sitting across a desk from someone who wants to know about NA. It’s something we all need to keep in mind when electing a trusted servant.

Carrying a clear NA message could mean the difference between living in recovery and dying in confusion. It’s up to us to be responsible for providing an alternative to the confusion that brought us here in the first place. Choose our messengers well!

GW, California

That dang Third Tradition

I'm an addict. A gay addict. When I was introduced to NA, I read the literature and went to the meetings. Everything I heard in meetings and everything I read in our literature was about heterosexuals' problems and how heterosexuals coped with them. One thing became apparent immediately: This was a fellowship about heterosexual recovery.

You can't imagine how relieved this realization made me. My addiction was safe. I'm not heterosexual. I could, with a clear conscience, tell myself I tried NA with an open mind, but found it wasn't for me.

The only sticking point was that dang Third Tradition. It let me know that there is no such thing as being a partial member of Narcotics Anonymous. This clear thinking appealed to me. If I had a desire to stop using, I qualified. Regardless of how different I felt from others in NA, I had a right to one-hundred-percent membership in NA. In fact, one-hundred-percent NA is the only type of membership there is.

In the part of the country I'm from, people are sticklers for the traditions. As a result, my membership in NA is never in question. I can introduce myself any way I want to today—even as an "and a." You know, "I'm an addict and an alcoholic." No one yells at me to tell me that's redundant. No one hisses. No one rolls his or her

eyes. Instead, I get that great big "Welcome!"

The same goes for my sharing. If I say I have five years sober, the crowd goes wild with glee. And the hugs... my goodness!

Occasionally someone moves here from one of the coasts and tries to sow dissension. They're well-meaning, to be sure. They even care with all their heart. They try to tell us that HP or some such thing insists we speak a certain way in order to be members of NA. Or that we can be a member of anything in the world, so long as it's not another twelve step fellowship. God love 'em.

Sooner or later, some gentle soul takes them aside and helps them read the Third Tradition as it is written in our book, *It Works: How and Why*. At the bottom of page 148 and continuing to the top of page 149 we are told: "We learn to practice tolerance of addicts who don't look like us, think like us, or share like us. We teach by example. Pressuring new members to talk or act like we do may send them back to the streets. It certainly denies them the right to recover and learn in their own way."

Sometimes it takes a while for this gentle message of love and acceptance to sink in. Nevertheless, with patience, these folks eventually learn to abide by all the traditions just as they're written.

I'm indebted to the members who went ahead of me, teaching me the meaning of the Third Tradition. No matter what I say, think, feel, or sleep with, no matter how many fellowships I'm a member of, membership in Narcotics Anonymous is unconditional.

KE, Minnesota

From our readers



My First Step in recovery

My First Step tells me I'm powerless over my addiction and my life is unmanageable. That means to me that I have no control over my addiction or my life. It tells me that when things occur during the course of everyday living, I have no effect on the way things come out. It tells me that I must accept what happens in my life and continue to move forward.

The First Step tells me I must use all the tools I learn about in the program to weather storms when they hit. It tells me that when things happen I need to turn it over to God because he knows all. Everything happens for a reason. God hasn't brought me this far to abandon me now.

The second part of the step deals with living life on life's terms. It lets me know my life will never be manageable, but I can live each day to the best of my ability. I deal with each situation as it arises, and don't try to manage outcomes. I try to remember that some situations require more of a reaction than others; not everything is life-threatening.

One of the stumbling blocks for me in Step One is believing that social acceptability equals recovery. Step One tells me that just because I have recaptured some of the things I lost in

my addiction, I'm not necessarily recovering. If I don't change my attitudes, ideas, and behaviors, I'll use again. Step One tells me I must become responsible—not because of how it will make me look to others, but because it is the right thing to do.

Step One tells me that once I stop using, I have choices I can make concerning my life. When I was using I had only one choice: find a way to keep doing it. Step One tells me that once I surrender and admit total and complete defeat, I can begin to live. During my addiction I wasn't living; I was just existing. Step One helps me to understand myself. I become aware of how compulsion and obsession and self-centeredness affect every area of my life.

I can begin to reach out for help once I've admitted my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life. Step One tells me I don't have to have all the answers and know everything. I can go to people who have been through what I'm going through, and they can show me how to get through it without using. Step One tells me I can begin to look forward to the future and stop living in the past.

AG, New Jersey

Recovery and risks

In my active addiction, fear ruled my life. One of the most profound things I heard when I got clean was the acronym FEAR. It meant "Face Everything And Recover." I learned from my sponsor and other recovering addicts that the only way to accomplish this was to apply the Twelve Steps in my daily life. By doing so, to the best of my ability, I was able to establish a conscious contact with a Higher Power.

I must take risks. The first risk I took was facing life on life's terms without the use of drugs. The second risk was getting a sponsor and sharing honestly with him. I learned about faith and trust. Risks were easy to face with a trusting relationship with my Higher Power.

I arrived in NA hopeless, penniless, homeless, jobless, etc. I was fortunate that my parents took me in when they saw I was finally serious about getting help. Other addicts are not as fortunate, and my prayers go out to them. Also, I was fortunate that NA around here was much more serious then than it is today. I was told to "sit down, shut up, and keep coming back."

After I was clean for around three months, I started looking for work. I had some college and thought that now, since I was clean, I would find a job easily. Wrong! I sent out about 300 resumes and got two responses that led to one interview that led to—no job! This is when I understood the slogan, "Not in your time, in His time," and another profound acronym: TIME—"Things I Must Earn." I had to get humble and take a mini-

mum-wage job, the first one I had had in about fifteen years.

After working at this job for about three months, I decided, with trust in my Higher Power, to go back to school. By attending meetings, sharing, praying, and working steps with my sponsor, life was starting to look good.

During the four years I have spent here, my Higher Power has blessed me with many miracles. I got married to a beautiful, kind, sensitive, and generous woman (another addict). We have a beautiful, healthy baby girl, and I have received three promotions at work.

The only thing NA promises is that we never have to use again. I worked through the Twelve Steps with my sponsor during this period. Recovery is a continuing process. I do not graduate; I go back to the beginning and start again. It is the only reason I was able to show up and get through it.

I've learned from showing up that recovery is much more than not using and going to meetings. I can't experience recovery unless I do these things, but I must take risks in my life. We are all unique in what risks we will take, but some must be taken in order for us to grow. I know that if I had written down what I expected would happen in my recovery, I would have sold myself short. I have so much hope in my life today and I know it will only get better.

BJ, New Jersey

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

Manipur: 1-3 Mar. 1997; 1st Imphal Area Convention; Khumanlampak State Youth Center, Imphal; other hotels: 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, PO Box 93, Imphal 795001, Manipur, India

ISRAEL

Tel Aviv: 4-7 Sept. 1997; 14th European Convention and Conference; Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv; info: 972/3/5758669; fax: 972/3/7526888; Israel RSO, PO Box 21470, Tel Aviv, Israel

ITALY

Lombardy: 25-27 Apr. 1997; 14th Italy Regional Convention; Hotel Splendid, Bellaria; rsvns: 39/541344314; info: 39/774920776

NORWAY

Buskerud: 8-10 Aug. 1997; Area East Convention; info: 47/32751637; OØKNA-97, PO Box 2399, Strømsø 3003, Drammen, N-Norway

PERU

La Libertad: 14-16 Feb 1997; 3rd Peru Regional Convention; info: 51/9957841; NA Oficina Nacional, Casilla Postal 18-0523, Lima 18, Peru

SWITZERLAND

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

UNITED KINGDOM

England: 28-30 Mar. 1997; London Convention; info: LCNA-8 c/o UKSO, PO Box 1980, London N19 3LS, England

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: 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; CCRCA, PO Box 3908, Simi Valley, CA 93063

2) 1 Mar. 1997; Southern California Regional Assembly; info: (310) 396-4812; Let Your Voice Be Heard, 1935 S. Myrtle Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016

3) 28-30 Mar. 1997; Southern California Region Spring Gathering; Westin LAX Hotel; rsvns: (310) 216-5858; info: (714) 638-5898 or (714) 639-1022; Spring Gathering, PO Box 7825, Torrance, CA 90504

4) 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

5) 30 May - 1 June 1997; In Pursuit of Unity Campout; Marysville Riverfront Park, Marysville; info: (916) 742-5167; e-mail: mleahy@syix.com

6) 3-6 July 1997; Western States Unity Convention; Riveria Resort, Palm Springs; info: (619) 320-4023 or (619) 367-5828; WSUC, PO Box 399, San Jacinto, CA 92581

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 Adventure Beach Resort; North Miami Beach; rsvns: (305) 932-2233; info: (305) 270-0030; FSSBNA, 7812 SW 103rd Place, Miami, FL 33173

2) 25-27 Apr. 1997; Recovery in Paradise; Knights Key Campground, Mile Marker 49, Marathon; info: (305) 294-3325 or (305) 293-8444 or (305) 292-5011

3) 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: 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

Hawaii: 4-6 Apr. 1997; 13th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; Camp Makuleia, North Shore, Oahu; info: (808) 988-7194 or (808) 262-0848 or (808) 988-7194 or (808) 261-4272; Oahu Gathering, 2819-A Kahawai Street, Honolulu, HI 96822

2) 12-14 Sep. 1997; Maui Area Gathering of the Fellowship; Camp Keanae, Maui; info: (808) 879-6412; Gathering, PO Box 3002, Kahului, HI 96732

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, 212 S Marion St. #27, Oak Park, IL 60302

2) 4-6 Apr. 1997; Rock River Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Rock Falls; rsvns: (815) 626-5500; info: (815) 964-5467; RRCNA-6, PO Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

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

2) 23-25 May 1997; North Central Indiana Area Convention; Camp Mack, Waubesa Lake, Milford; info: (616) 663-0267; please send speaker tapes to: Convention Programming, PO Box 1052, Elkhart, IN 46515

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: 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

2) 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: 28-30 Mar. 1997; Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Owensboro; info: KRCNA, PO Box 126, Robards, KY 42452

Louisiana: 15-17 Nov. 1996; New Orleans Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Canal Street, New Orleans; rsvns: (800) 824-3359; info: (504) 243-0885 or (504) 246-6594; NOACNA, PO Box 871090, New Orleans, LA 70128

Maryland: 4-6 Apr. 1997; Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; info: (202) 362-4525; CPRCNA, PO Box 8006, Silver Spring, MD 20910

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

2) 18-20 July 1997; 5th Western Massachusetts Area Convention; Springfield Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (413) 267-5099 or (413) 783-3644; e-mail: Nonney@ix.netcom.com; WMACNA, PO Box 5914, Springfield, MA 01101

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

2) 3-6 July 1997; Michigan Regional Convention; Valley Plaza Resort, Midland; rsvns: (800) 825-2700, mention Group #G5275; info: (517) 548-4043 or (810) 694-3546; please send speaker tapes to: Program Committee, Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

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: <http://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

Nevada: 27-30 Mar. 1997; Las Vegas Convention; Monte Carlo Hotel; rsvns: (800) 822-8652; info: (702) 658-0003 or (702) 252-4657; SNCC, 4542 E. Tropicana, Suite 101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

New Jersey: 28 Feb. - 2 Mar. 1997; Cape-Atlantic Area Convention; Seaview Country Club, Ansecon; rsvns: (800) 932-8000; info: (609) 348-9292; CAACNA-7, PO Box 91, Glasboro, NJ 08028

2) 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

New York: 7-9 Mar. 1997; Rochester Area Convention; Radisson Hotel, Rochester; rsvns: (716) 546-3741; info: (716) 787-3290 or (716) 288-1842; RACNA, PO Box 485, Rochester, NY 14605

Ohio: 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 43610-0018

2) 1-3 Aug. 1997; Tri-Area Gateway to Freedom Convention; Sheraton City Center, Cleveland; rsvns: (216) 771-5129; info: (216) 663-2118 or (216) 295-2239 or (216) 341-4842 or (216) 651-2936; Tri-Area 3, PO Box 999, Shaker Heights, OH 44122

Oklahoma: 21-23 Mar. 1997; 11th Oklahoma Regional Convention; Fountainhead Hotel and Resort, Eufaula; rsvns: (800) 345-6343 or (918) 689-9173; info: (918) 343-9807 or (405) 842-8114; OKRCNA, PO Box 12621, 39th Street Station, Oklahoma City, OK 73157-2621

Oregon: 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 97290-0415

Pennsylvania: 14-17 Feb. 1997; Mid-Atlantic Regional Service Conference; Holiday Inn, Lancaster; rsvns: (717) 299-5500; info: (717) 786-7015; MARCNA, PO Box 2574, Lancaster, PA 17608

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

Utah: 18-20 July 1997; 14th Utah Regional Campvention; Whittings Campground, Mapleton; info: (801) 476-7330 or (801) 491-9460 or (801) 489-8326; Campvention, PO Box 994, Springville, UT 84663

West Virginia: 9-11 May 1997; Mountaineer Regional Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley; rsvns: (304) 372-7860; info: (304) 562-5835; 12 Steppin' into Spring, PO Box 2381, Westover, WV 26502

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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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