

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

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

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

THE NA Way[®] MAGAZINE

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The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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Spiritual principles in the steps

At each NA meeting we attend, spiritual principles are discussed. Whether it be a topic meeting on surrender or a Third Step meeting, reference is always being made to the fact that this is a spiritual program, and that we can recover from the disease of addiction by incorporating spiritual principles into our lives.

For the record, spirituality is different from religion; spiritual principles are not religious doctrine. The Basic Text, on page eighteen, states that "There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance towards spiritual principles." Each of the Twelve Steps is based on spiritual principles that when practiced daily help us to live clean, happy, joyous, and free. By living this program one day at a time, we experience these principles and gradually incorporate them into who we are and carry them into all areas of our lives.

The First Step talks about surrender—surrendering to the fact that we are addicts, and that we are powerless over our addiction. It talks about surrendering to the program of Narcotics Anonymous and surrendering our

reservations. It also suggests surrendering our control and our old ways if we don't want to go back to using. The First Step states, among other things, that when we surrender "...we don't have to fight anymore [and] ...we overcome the alienation of addiction." For me, surrender is sweet. What I get in return for surrender is freedom from active addiction and peace.

When I practice this principle in other areas of my life, I also benefit. For example, I could waste my time talking 'til I'm blue in the face to someone about something that they are not willing to hear, or I could surrender and spare myself the aggravation. Or, when driving behind a car doing twenty miles per hour on Route 4, I have two choices: I could drive with my heart in my throat, cursing the guy, being all mad, definitely not enjoying the ride, or I could surrender to the fact he's in front of me—I'm powerless, so relax and enjoy the ride. Surrender is an action that is my choice. Sometimes I have to surrender over and over again, but the rewards are worth it.

Step Two talks about open-mindedness and sanity. I associate being open-minded with sanity and being closed-minded with insanity, as it leaves me alone in my own head with my own thoughts and ways. It also talks about the need for, and the process of coming to believe in, a Power greater than ourselves. Being open-minded is crucial to the process of coming to believe, for we need to be open in order to receive. If the shades are down, sunlight cannot come in through the window. In the same way, if my mind is closed to the con-

cept of a loving God, then that God cannot come in.

In life we hear, "leave yourself open," implying that opportunity will knock and all we have to do is be open to receive it. This step makes reference to the fact that insanity is using drugs, day after day, as we did. It talks about the need for faith and sanity. If insanity is using drugs, sanity must be equated with not using drugs. Step Two talks about being restored to sanity via the process of coming to believe. For me, the most powerful line in this step is: "Most of us lacked a working relationship with a Higher Power." The difference in my life, as a result of having a working relationship with the God of my understanding, is like night and day. When I was using I felt hopeless. Step Two has given me hope in a Higher Power and the hope for peace, happiness, and a tomorrow that is better than yesterday.

In Step Three we make the decision to surrender our wills and our lives to the care of that Higher Power. Step Three states that when we "let go and let God," we develop a life worth living. It also says, "we surrender quietly, and let the God of our understanding take care of us." There is nothing in this world that is more healing than when I surrender to my God. This program has given me faith, and my faith has given me the knowledge that no matter what, it is all right, I'm all right, and things will turn out exactly as they should.

For me, one of the biggest lessons in Step Three is that I'm responsible for the effort and God is responsible for the results. This tells me I don't

need to worry about how things will turn out because God is in charge of the results; therefore, I know everything will turn out well, as it's supposed to. I also believe that God definitely helps me do my part—the effort—and that I don't need to help God with His part—the results.

The soul-searching and self-honesty required in Step Four are extremely spiritual. Before I came to the program, self-honesty was the absolute farthest thing from my mind. I didn't want to know anything or face anything. I ran from, rationalized, and justified everything. I went to great lengths to not face the painful truth. Step Four is all about sitting down with myself and getting honest about who I am, what I feel, what I've done, and what I've experienced in my life. Step Four is about what makes me *me*. A person cannot run a successful business if they don't know their inventory. In the same way, I cannot live a prosperous life if I don't take my own inventory.

In doing the honest inventory that Step Four requires, I have gained an inner strength that is beyond words. I had the courage to do that which I feared the most, and I survived. Step Four talks about how we learn to survive our emotions. Running from my emotions nearly killed me. The strength that I have as a result of working Step Four gives me strength and freedom to live. I faced what I perceived to be the hardest thing for me to face—myself. That makes it easier for me to face the other things that I fear facing on a daily basis. I could be surrounded by roses on the outside, but if things aren't all right

on the inside, all I feel is the pain of thorns. Or I could be in the midst of thorns, but if I'm all right on the inside, I'm able to smell the roses.

Step Five depicts honesty, trust, courage, and sharing with another the realities of ourselves. Step Five is a spiritual union between God, ourselves, and another. Step Five also offers freedom. One of the most valuable and beautiful gifts in life is the intimacy that comes from honestly sharing with another. In Step Four I looked myself in the eyes, but in Step Five I needed the courage to look another in the eyes in the presence of the God of my understanding.

For me, Step Five was one of the steps that I feared the most. I did not want to share myself with you; after all, you might reject me. I felt lower than everyone else for so long, and as a consequence of putting myself down, you were raised above me. One of the gifts of Step Four and Step Five is realizing that both you and I have positive points as well as negative points; thus we are equals, neither of us better or worse than the other. That makes being open with people and confronting people easier to do. I used to walk with my head down, eyes to the ground. Today, as a result of looking myself and another human being in the eyes with the contents of my soul, I can look anyone in the eyes comfortably.

Step Six is spiritual because we become willing to let go of the defects which can cause us to act unspiritually. Willingness is a key factor in this step. I had to, and still have to, pray for the willingness that is essential to this step. Step Six talks about the

negative impact that our character defects have on our lives. To sum it up: My defects hurt me and those around me. I don't deserve to hurt and the people around me don't deserve to be hurt by me; therefore, I need to be willing to let these old ways go. I honestly believe that Step Six does not have to be painful. However, for me it was. I ran as hard as I could with my "stuff," right to the painful edge. When I couldn't take it anymore, I prayed to God and became willing.

While my character defects leave me an open, raw wound, Step Seven is the balm that heals. I humbly placed my sick, hurting self before God and asked my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings. I've heard it said at a meeting that character defects become shortcomings when we act on them. To me that means the tendency to revert to my old ways might always be there, but that doesn't mean that I have to act on it. The beautiful part of Step Seven is the humility that it talks about—accepting ourselves and others as we are, with our positive and negative traits, and realizing that nobody is perfectly good or perfectly bad. Humility is taking an honest look at myself and accepting it. What a pressure that relieves—who I am is just right; I am the person God created me to be; I don't have to strive to be like somebody else, I just have to strive to be the best me that I can be; and who that is is beautiful.

My actions are not who I am. For so long I based my worth on what I did. If I was mean during the day, I was a bad person. If I was nice, I felt like a better person. My actions are my ac-

tions; they can be positive or negative, but I am worth more than my actions. The Seventh Step also talks about how my way is not the only way. I knew what was best for me and for you. I also knew the best way to get the job done, so everybody else could just keep their input to themselves. I didn't know anything, I just couldn't admit that fact. My mouth ran with nothing to back it up. Today, one of the greatest gifts is realizing what I don't know and being okay with it. It's such freedom not to have to know everything. In not knowing, I have had the luxury of learning so much.

I feared Step Eight the most and put it off the longest, but to be honest with you, I got the most out of it. All that is required in Step Eight is that we make a list of those we have harmed. Simple. It is not making amends or anything like that. It's just a list. I could not bear the thought of admitting to myself all the hurt that I had caused others. This thought hurt me more than anything else, and facing it was extremely hard. By the grace of God, and my pushy sponsor, I was given the courage to do Step Eight. I wrote a thorough list of all the damage I had done. I categorized the list in a way that worked for me. Words cannot explain the freedom that I got as a result of writing my list and going over it with my sponsor. It's very paradoxical, and I don't know how it works, but in looking at all the hurt and wrong that I had done, for the first time in my life I was able to put the bat down and forgive myself. I realized that all the hurt I had caused others was a direct result of my own pain, and maybe because I was

also on the list, I forgave myself. My Higher Power was also on the list because I felt I hurt God each time I hurt myself or somebody else. Through the Eighth Step, today I am more forgiving of myself and others, and that old bat has never swung so hard since then.

Step Nine talks about making amends to those I have harmed. On a personal level I feel as though I have been making amends since the day I got clean. With Step Nine I am taking the initiative to face the people I have hurt. This gives me freedom from the fear of wondering when everything that has been swept under the carpet might suddenly come up. In staying clean, I believe I am making amends to myself, and in trying to live by the spiritual principles of the program on a daily basis, I feel that I am making amends to God.

Step Ten helps me to live each day to the best of my ability. It enables me to deal with the day, in the day. For me, the Tenth Step is a daily Fourth Step. In looking at myself and my actions each day, I am addressing things as they happen, which allows me to modify my behavior at any given moment and to correct any mistakes promptly. Step Ten keeps excess baggage off my back, which enables me to live in the moment and to make the most of each moment.

Not only does the prayer and meditation talked about in the Eleventh Step bring me closer to the God of my understanding, but the acts themselves offer me peace and serenity. Any time that I spend with my Higher Power is quality time. When I first got clean I prayed for a lot of specific things and had some thanks. Today

my prayers are full of thanks and I ask for few specifics, and only if they be His will. I always pray for His will because I do know that it is the best thing, even if I don't like it or if it hurts, as in the case of losing a loved one. My faith in the God of my understanding is the strongest conviction that I have in my heart; it does not waver. My faith is a direct result of working this program. I believe that NA is a gift from God and I believe that it is God's will for me to work the program of Narcotics Anonymous on a daily basis.

Step Twelve is about incorporating all of these principles into all of my affairs, to the best of my ability, and, through practicing these principles, to carry the message of recovery to other addicts. Practicing these principles to the best of my ability, on a daily basis, gives me more than words can say. As a result, I am true to myself and true to others. I feel good about who I am and what I'm trying to do, and that is manifest by the things that I have going on in my life. As a result of practicing these principles, I have a better day, and I help others to have a better day also. I try to be kind to myself and kind to others. I know I can't change the world; but when I think about it, the world is made up of a bunch of people just doing their part. I feel that when I practice these principles in all areas of my life on a daily basis, to the best of my ability, I am doing my part in contributing to making it a better world. It goes without saying that as a result of my working this program, my hand is always extended to the addict who wants to take it.

SA, New Jersey

Back to the way it used to be

The year was 1968. Flower Power was fighting Viet Nam while Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and others were fighting the British Invasion. Motown was selling their "soul." Captain Kirk was going . . . , and Batman was *not* a movie. A nation was silently learning that it would never quite get over Kennedy's assassination. My own world was much smaller.

That summer I played catcher for the Little League champion Cubs. I had a steady girlfriend named Paula. We were both innocent then and had nothing to hide. We simply enjoyed being with each other—sitting on the curb outside or couch inside, doing homework, digging the sounds, or dreaming of being grown up. Often on weekends we'd go to the dance at the local recreation center, ecstatically watching one another while the band played and the white in our clothes glowed like neon under the black lights.

We had many friends, too. It was a time when people were easy to accept. And we didn't seem to worry about

who we were, as long as we had fun and were allowed to be adventurous. Feelings sometimes got hurt at play, but everyone could bounce back. Fear was for the good; it kept us out of detention, fire, and poison ivy. Life was simple. We didn't have to name our beliefs or make others see things the same way. Our purpose was to be who we were. We had faith in life.

I was curious about how life was created. It was simple, yet complex. Trees gave us cooling shade, but made us rake leaves and sweat. Clouds rained on us, but also painted pictures of our dreams and fantasies. I went to church sometimes to learn about God. Mostly, though, I liked the fireside chats in the evenings with my peers; we could share unabashedly about who loved us and cared for us. Later that winter, my life changed course.

I was also curious about drugs and had to try them. Previously I had flirted with alcohol, until the night I drank way too much. Vaguely aware of my insane behavior the night before, and reeling from acute hangover symptoms, I doubted I would ever fancy getting "sloshed" again. But the side effects of other drugs were subtle to me, and I began changing my lifestyle and friends for the want of them. Within three more years my life had changed drastically to accommodate my lust to get high. I quit school and got a full-time job, because making money meant more drugs. I blindly agreed to share an apartment with a stranger who was much older than me and to sell drugs for him, because selling drugs meant more drugs for me. I regularly accepted the

consequential hangovers, because drinking meant getting high. I was almost fifteen years old, out of control, and had unknowingly crossed the line.

That spring, after enduring the lectures from Mom and the principal, I reenrolled in school and tried to go back; but I didn't fit anymore. I didn't fit—not in school or with my old friends, nor with my family or at the fireside chats. I didn't even feel like I fit myself anymore unless I was getting high. Thus began my death and condemnation to the living hell we know as addiction.

Instead of making friends, I made enemies. Employers were not career makers; they became tyrants who had all the money I wanted. And when I didn't get what I wanted, I usually snubbed them and moved on. I decided my family misunderstood my intentions and left them alone. God became the merciless prosecutor who failed to answer my pleas when I ran dry. Negative principles became my weapons.

Greed, envy, lust, and resentment fortified my condition of denial, allowing me to believe that I did not have a problem. I believed I still had decent values in spite of the fact that I could never practice them. Deep inside me, a vast confusion began to form, arising out of the difference between who I thought I was and who I really had become. It was everything and everyone else that interfered with my life, prohibiting me from attaining the only freedom I thought I could rely on: getting high.

Eventually my devices failed me as the world around me decided not to

participate in my insanity. Even the high began to fail me, as there was never enough to fill the disturbing void inside me that continued to grow. I started feeling the loneliness I had created over the years. At first, playing the heroic loner figure and self-pity comforted me, until my emptiness grew to such dimensions that it was undeniable. The loneliness my soul dwelled in was so vast, so deep, so hollow, and so painful that I cursed the God of the trees and clouds. I begged for help. Through Narcotics Anonymous, a God answered who could ignore the recklessness of my pleas.

I surrendered.

I recognized those who had trod the same soulscape I had experienced, and I clung to the hope they shared. Between intermittent bouts of self-centeredness, anger, and self-pity, I began taking suggestions and working the Twelve Steps, trying to replace my weapons with the spiritual principles of the program.

To make amends means to put right. A sponsor told me I should start mending the relationship with myself first, because without a solid standing with myself I would run the risk of making amends for the wrong reasons. I knew that if I were going to do any justice to this process I would have to find out where I crossed that line and start rebuilding a relationship with myself from there. Recovery is a process indeed.

Throughout my life I learned many negative principles that I must unlearn as I try to replace them with the ones I learn in recovery. After all, those negative principles compounded each other

and fed the desperation and loneliness I sought escape from. And the new principles are the light on the path to the God of my understanding.

In time, by abstaining from drugs and practicing the principles taught in the steps, I will be able to grow up again. I'm certain I'll be mending this relationship for a long time to come (old dogs and new tricks, you know). Having accepted this way of life for a few days at a time now, I no longer have to suffer the moral repression I chose through active addiction. I consciously feel the difference today. And feeling the way I felt in the days before I crossed the line is my goal. Some day I'll unlearn enough from addiction to safely bring the champion catcher back. I have hope and faith in recovery.

MS, Florida

Jimeto

The meeting had already started when the door opened. Quietly he stepped into the room and, with one sweeping glance, he surveyed those in the room. Why did he cross the room and take the seat next to mine? When his turn came to speak, there was a softness in his voice. "My name is Jimeto, I am an addict." As he began to talk about the topic that had been chosen for discussion at the evening meeting, there was a special quality to his speech, a wisdom beyond his years. I became lost in his words. As soon as he began to speak, I felt the pangs of regret about the snap judgment I had made about this strange-looking little man.

My error in judgment surely and quickly taught me the difference between humility and self-righteousness. This was just the beginning of a lesson I will never forget, just as I will never forget Jimeto. I have asked myself many times if this is because I was so terribly wrong about him in my first impression. I was so very negative and critical. His style of dress was most unusual. He looked as though he had just stepped off an old western movie set. His appearance at first made me think he was dirty, smelly, and uncouth.

As he settled into the chair next to mine, I managed, with a great deal of effort, to resist the urge to scoot my chair in the opposite direction. I do not understand the need I felt to put space between Jimeto and myself, but I would suppose it was some sort of fear of those who are different and unfamiliar. It might have been his long, raven black hair or his buckskin shirt and the laced-up boots that I noticed first. His hair went to the middle of his back. A section of it was wrapped with a leather strap and braided. The rest of his hair hung straight and heavy, as if greased. The clothes he wore were unusual, to say the least. He wore jeans which were faded and tattered. There was an odor that was not unpleasant, but woody, like the smoke of a campfire.

Jimeto was not a large man by any description. He was short and stout. His broad shoulders looked as though they had carried some pretty heavy burdens or possibly even the weight of the world at some time past. His coal-black eyes held such secrets, waiting to be told. There was, no doubt, centuries of wisdom waiting to be shared with any willing listener.

It was after the meetings, in the months that followed, that I was able to become better acquainted with Jimeto and I recognized the specialness of this man. Jimeto, a Hopi Indian from northern New Mexico, shared with me his love of living a solitary life deep within the thick protection of the Sacramento mountains. He said he felt at peace with the self-sufficiency of his lifestyle there. Upon learning he had made his buckskin shirt and boots himself, I examined them more closely. It

was then that I realized the quality of the craftsmanship and artistic ability that were not evident upon our first meeting. Not that they weren't there for me to see, but they were hidden due to the fact that I was so closed-minded. At first I saw only the differences in his appearance. Immediately, my quickness to judge, criticize, and form a negative first impression kicked in, keeping me from being open to the beauty of those very differences I was now coming to admire and appreciate.

This proud Native American had left the place he loved to be near his ailing mother. After just a few months, Jimeto found himself entangled in the sickness of drug addiction which was so prevalent among his family. It was this disease of addiction and his willingness to seek help that had brought him into the meeting that first night.

There was another special aspect to Jimeto. He had a spiritual side, one that I would never be able to explain with mere words. I never quite understood it myself. Whenever I talked with him, it was as if those piercing black eyes could see into the depth of my soul. Once I asked Jimeto what it was that I was feeling. He laughed and said, "The Creator communicating spirit to spirit." I wondered to myself if this was the same spirit I call the Holy Ghost. Again it brought to mind the important lessons my Higher Power, whom I choose to call Jesus Christ, had allowed me to learn from a Medicine Man of the Hopi tribe. He was a poet and often shared his poems with the group. Even in these messages you could hear the

wisdom beyond his years that seemed to be ageless. He came from some time far in the past. It must have been a simpler time and a better time.

Jimeto has been gone from the group for several years now, but I have not forgotten. I have not forgotten my friend or the valuable lessons that I learned through him. I am not as quick to make snap judgments about people as I once was. I practice a more accepting attitude toward those who are different from myself. I seem to have torn down many of the walls of self-righteousness and found in their place a truer meaning of humility within my heart. I now understand that differences are not to be feared or made fun of, but reanalyzed in their specialness and their uniqueness. This is just as the Creator intended: for each of us to be special and unique, each in our own way. It is our purpose to find our way to what the Creator intended each of us to be. I have my dear friend Jimeto to thank for all this. It is with love and gentleness that I will remember him. I like to think he found his way back into the mountains, that he is at peace and free from the addictions which entangled him while amidst civilization.

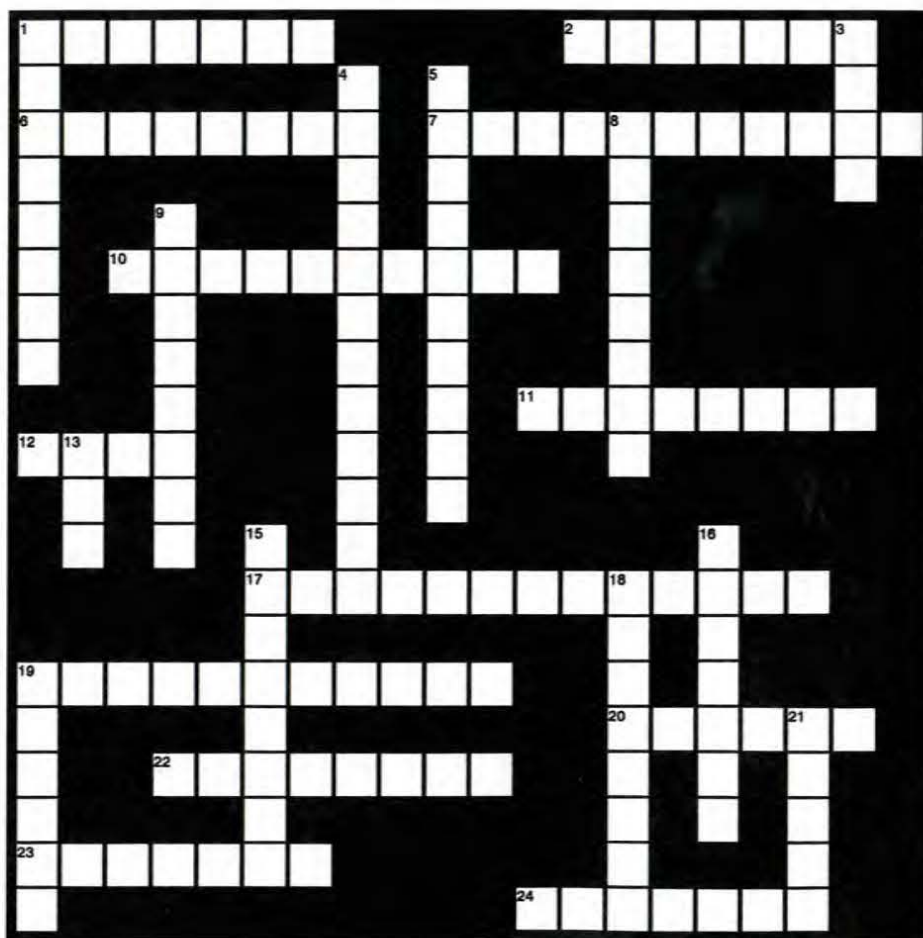
DF, New Mexico



CROSSWORD

P U Z Z L E

RECOVERY & RELAPSE



Recovery and relapse crossword puzzle

The page numbers identify where quotes can be found in Basic Text.

Across

- 1) _____ is not a requirement.
- 2) "We _____ we must do something." (pg. 78)
- 6) "Relapse is not a sign of _____ failure." (pg. 74)
- 7) "After we make a mistake, our _____ is to rationalize it." (pg. 77)
- 10) "A relapse may provide the charge for the _____ process." (pg. 75)
- 12) "We _____ each other." (pg. 79)
- 14) "Positive input might include _____, meetings, and literature." (pg. 79)
- 17) This can be a "terribly painful area." (pg. 78)
- 19) An enemy of members with substantial clean time. (pg. 80)
- 20) "NA members have insight and _____ suggestions to offer." (pg. 80)
- 22) "Staying clean must be our top _____." (pg. 82)
- 23) "... what we have has come from dependence on a Power _____ than ourselves. . . ." (pg. 74)
- 24) "Our disease is so _____ that it can get us into impossible situations." (pg. 80)

Down

- 1) "Social acceptability does not equal _____." (pg. 21)

- 3) "Our _____ tell us that we can do it on our own, but loneliness and paranoia quickly return." (pg. 77)
- 4) "Life may again become _____, monotonous, and boring." (pg. 75)
- 5) "Many of us have _____ coming into the fellowship." (pg. 78)
- 8) "Keeping our illusion of reality, rather than using the tools of the program, will return us to _____." (pg. 78)
- 9) "We need to be _____ of where we come from." (pg. 78)
- 11) "It seems that being _____ is a huge stumbling block." (pg. 79)
- 13) "Self-will still leads us to make decisions based on manipulation, _____, lust or false pride." (pg. 77)
- 15) "This process is a _____ action of the spirit." (pg. 81)
- 16) "In our disease, we are dealing with a destructive, _____ power greater than ourselves that can lead to relapse." (pg. 80)
- 18) "Now we are in the _____ again." (pg. 82)
- 19) "Daily practice of our Twelve Step Program enables us to _____ from what we were to people guided by a Higher Power." (pg. 83)
- 21) "Unless the illusions that we can continue to use or stop using on our own are shattered, we most certainly sign our own death warrant." (pg. 76)

Thanks to DF, Mississippi

Fellowship news

What does it take to be a good trusted servant? Willingness, commitment, and no small measure of gratitude and other spiritual principles. In short, a "good program."

Throughout NA, there are thousands of members who fit this description. The creativity and love they pour into their service efforts result in some pretty wonderful things: new literature, conventions, enhancement of NA's reputation, and, most importantly, addicts finding recovery.

Every once in while, local service committees share with us how they're doing service. We were delighted to receive the two articles featured below. They're two great examples of what NA members can accomplish.

Thanks for believing in us

The Tuesday Candlelight Meeting of Narcotics Anonymous is, as the old-timers tell us, the first and oldest meeting in Northern California, surviving and strong in one location since 1966. In the two years I have attended, there have never been fewer than sixty to seventy-five addicts in attendance.

Unfortunately, the church that had opened its doors to us three decades ago regretfully asked us to move because it was struggling financially and needed our regular meeting room to open up a pre-school and ESL school. They gave us plenty of time and praise and wrote a letter of recommendation for our next facility.

We had an enormous celebration on our last night there, with a panel of speakers, food, and visits from people who started the meeting thirty years ago. We were sad but extremely thankful to the church and wanted to send them a special message from our group.

Enclosed is a letter I wrote, with the spirit of the group, so really it is from all of us to the church that so willingly gave us thirty years of meeting space as well as room for Thanksgiving marathons each year. We thought it should be shared with the rest of the fellowship.

Dear Lutheran Church of the Cross,

This letter is to express our gratitude to you for allowing us to meet in your hall for the past thirty years. The Tuesday Candlelight Meeting of Narcotics Anonymous is the oldest of our meetings in Northern California and has sustained itself largely due to your willingness to make your building available to us. By doing this, you have done much more than provide four walls, you have given us a place to recover and become productive members of society. For this and for the lives that have been saved and redeemed, we thank you.

When Narcotics Anonymous began in 1953, addicts met in secret because public awareness of addiction was limited, and few had faith that we could recover. We met in basements, alleyways, and people's homes because no one wanted to risk inviting addicts into their buildings. As we met, we began to recover and live clean, responsible, and productive lives. We were limited, however, in the numbers of people we could reach, given the constraints of public mistrust. It has been people like you, who were willing to take a chance on us, who have helped us reach many more people suffering with the disease of addiction. Having a regular meeting place has given us dignity, a sense of self-responsibility, and a place to share our common solution with all who seek it so that, as our literature reads, "no addict seeking recovery need ever die from the horrors of addiction."

We have found that our solution in Narcotics Anonymous works for anyone who has the desire to stop using drugs. Our long-term members will attest that when we recover, we not only stop being liabilities to our communities, we often become great assets. When an addict recovers, he/she becomes a responsible person in the family, the workplace, the community, and the world at large. It is through our meetings that we see this miracle take place again and again.

In the past thirty years, thousands of different addicts have met in your hall on Tuesday nights to hear our message of recovery. For each and every one, we thank you sincerely. Your belief in us has enabled us to start our lives over in a safe place.

We have found a new location and our Tuesday night meeting will continue. We wish you all the good will you have extended toward us these past three decades and again we thank you with all of our hearts.

Sincerely,

The Tuesday Candlelight Meeting

We moved to Parker Street, also in Berkeley, and the meeting is still huge, with faithful attendees and new faces as well. If you are ever in Berkeley, California, come by and see us at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday night.

CO, California

Welcome Home

At the first Central Carolina Area Convention, held 21-23 September 1996, one of the workshop sessions was called "Good News Travels Fast." This was not a reference to gossip in the fellowship. Rather, it was a presentation of the different ways in which the members of the fellowship communicate through the print media. Literature development and review committees and the loner group were described and *The NA Way Magazine* was discussed. Part of the workshop was for the attendees to write a piece called "Welcome Home."

Each addict wrote his or her own thoughts in one or two sentences. Then pairs were formed and the sentences combined and augmented. When the members of the pairs had completed the combination of their writing, the pairs were combined into groups of four, combining and revising the product of the group until all the input was included in the product. Finally, all of the groups combined

into the full group of participants. No member expressed any disagreement with the final product.

All of the participants shared that the experience was interesting and different. Several asked for the WSC Literature Committee address to try to get their areas interested in forming literature review committees.

As was to be expected, there was a great deal of similarity in the writings of the various individuals. One group related personal feelings in this way:

One Sunday while I was in treatment, some members from what is now my home group took me to what is now my home. I learned to hug; I learned to feel; I learned to communicate; and I learned to be reached. This is a comfortable place to be—a place to be free to be me. Whenever there's a knock on the door now, we all answer it, "Welcome home!"



Here is the final product of the whole group:

Welcome Home

For many years it's been a long, hard ride to find a place where I belong. I was lost in my disease. My mind was filled with rejection, hopelessness, isolation, alienation, and pain. Where there was pain, I learned to feel nothing.

When I found NA, I felt hope, acceptance, love, freedom, and joy. Thank God for the home I never had before.

Welcome
We accept you.

Welcome
You're safe here.

Welcome
to a place full of love
and compassion.

Welcome
You're free to grow
and change.

Many may come and go and travel to other distant homes. This home is free and available to anyone seeking one. You never have to be alone again.

Welcome home.

JC, North Carolina

Newsletters



Working the Ninth Step before it's too late

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

Many years ago I was working in a local nursing home. I worked as a certified nursing assistant and my work led me to encounter many interesting, elderly people. One of these people, a dear lady named P., touched my heart and we became friends. P. had multiple sclerosis, a chronic, slowly progressive disease affecting the central nervous system. This disease had left her unable to walk or use her left arm, but this rarely seemed to get her down. She always had a smile and a cheery note for everyone.

One Christmas season I was working the night shift on the hall where P. lived. I had gone into her room to reposition her, trying to make her as comfortable as possible. While adjusting her pillow, I noticed a small coin purse that she usually kept under her pillow. Something came over me and I carefully eased the coin purse out from under her pillow. I slipped the coin purse into my pocket and left her room. In a safe place, I removed ten dollars from the coin purse, then later returned the purse to its usual hiding place. The peculiar thing about it was that I didn't even need the money—it was just old behavior run amok.

Several days later, I was working the night shift again on P.'s hall when her call light came on. I went to see what she needed. I was helping her to get comfortable when she started to tell me about someone taking her money. "I hope they needed it for Christmas presents or something," she said, "and not for buying drugs." I felt small and despicable, but I couldn't bring myself to confess. After making her as comfortable as possible, I quickly left the room.

The next few months were difficult. I found myself avoiding P., even to the point of asking others to

answer her call light. I would take an alternate route so as not to walk down the hall where she lived. There was a sick feeling in my stomach that never seemed to go away. It was as if I had an internal Geiger counter that always registered in the red. Every day that I didn't rectify the situation was another day I felt less and less self-respect. My stealing her money made me feel bad enough, but not making amends to her just drove the stake of self-loathing further and further into my being. Even being transferred to another nursing station at the home wouldn't allow me to hide from my guilt and shame. Something had to be done. I started praying and asking God for guidance and strength.

Finally, one March day, I came to the nursing home to pick up my paycheck. P. was sitting outside in her wheelchair and I stopped to talk to her. I told her I had to run to the bank, but I wanted to talk to her when I got back. I returned to find her still sitting outside and took her to a quiet spot where we could talk privately. Sitting across from her, I tried to look her in the eyes. I told her that I was the one who had taken her ten dollars back in December and that I needed to confess and pay her back. She became teary-eyed. I took out a ten-dollar bill and held it out to her.

She said she didn't want the money, and a fearful feeling came over me. I knew I was doing the right thing, but I also knew my job was on the line. All she had to do was tell my employer and I would be fired. But something told me that she would not do that. She looked at me and told me that she admired the courage it must

have taken to tell her what I'd done. She told me to keep the money and buy myself a T-shirt or something. I told her that I couldn't do that and that if she didn't take the money, my restitution would not be complete. She took the money and then we talked for a while. Then it was time for her to go inside and time for me to go home. Things had changed between us, changed for the better. We shared a secret that somehow bound us together.

P. died later that year. I was working the day they held her memorial service in the chapel at the nursing home. The service was piped through the PA system and I listened as I stood in the courtyard outside the chapel. I remembered what P. and I had shared. Our secret would be buried along with her. Working a Ninth Step had allowed me to remember P. as a woman of graciousness and forgiveness, instead of being a weight to carry the rest of my life.

DF, Washington

Saying good-bye to reservations

From *New Attitudes*, the Bergen County, New Jersey area newsletter

In *It Works: How and Why*, it says: "We begin to let go of our reservations, those parts of ourselves we won't surrender to the program. Most of us do have some reservations when we first get clean. Even so, we need to find ways of addressing them."

Because those sentences appear in the chapter on Step One, I had read them relatively early on in my recovery. However, it wasn't until quite some time later, after having worked through a few of my own reservations—some of which I had known about right from the start, some of which I hadn't—that I gained a better understanding of what reservations were and how they were affecting my recovery.

The first one I faced was "only staying clean as long as our expectations are met." In my case, this reservation meant being completely willing to do whatever it took to stay clean—as long as my relationship was heading back on track. I was separated from my wife when I first came to NA, and even though I would have sworn to

anyone who would listen that I was staying clean for myself alone, secretly I was counting on this new way of life to fix my marriage.

Ironically, it was only after I was back with my wife that I began to understand the reservation that I had. I saw that getting my wife back wasn't the quick cure for my addiction that I had hoped it would be, and with the help of my sponsor I was able to let go of this reservation.

The next reservation I realized I had concerned the use of a specific drug that I had not used in my active addiction. On the surface, I understood that "in NA, it doesn't matter what or how much you used," but in my head I was still curious about this particular drug. I heard so many other addicts share about it that I began to wonder if I really belonged in NA, since I had not used it. I even considered going out, using this drug, and then (with luck) returning to NA so I could feel "a part of."

On my sponsor's suggestion, I shared honestly about this reservation and talked at length with fellow addicts who had done it, all of whom assured me that I was no less of an addict than they for not having used their drug of choice. Eventually, by learning that addiction is a disease that affects all areas of my life, and that drugs were just the most obvious symptom, I accepted that I did not have to use any particular drug to belong. I had earned my seat in Narcotics Anonymous with the pain and misery of my active addiction, which I remember quite clearly.

For some time after that, I truly believed that I had gotten rid of all my

reservations. My foundation grew strong as I worked the first three steps with my sponsor and attended meetings daily. I had commitments and was active in service work.

It wasn't until several years later that I realized I had been nourishing a major reservation all along. I honestly believed that there was one particular place I could go where people were using that did not affect my recovery. It's amazing how wrong one addict can be!

I caused myself a great deal of pain by holding on to this reservation. Fortunately, I have not had to relapse to learn my lesson. Several times a year I went to this place, often in the company of fellow recovering addicts. And after each time, I was miserable for a week or more afterwards, obsessed with thoughts of using and otherwise wanting to act out. And then, several months later, I would conveniently forget about how going into that environment had messed with me, so I'd go back and start the whole thing all over again.

For two-and-a-half years I repeated this pattern, until one time the pain afterward became too much to justify or rationalize away. I recognized that it was a reservation, plain and simple, and that I had two choices: I could either let it go and continue to grow in my recovery, or I could hold on to it and continue to suffer until I eventually relapsed.

Today I am willing to let go of all of my reservations, to the best of my ability. I have the slightest bit of humility, just enough to realize that I will never know all I need to know about recovery, that I continue to sur-

render each day, and that having clean time in no way exempts me from the dangers of reservations. Just for today, I will continue to put my reservations behind me, and am no longer willing to let them rob me of the benefits that the NA program has to offer.

Anonymous



Viewpoint



Editorial reply

To "Regarding Methadone and Other Drug-Replacement Programs," October 1996

Hi, I'm Linda and I'm a grateful recovering addict who just celebrated eight years clean, one day at a time. I was glancing through the October 1996 NA Way and saw this article from the World Service Board.

I was a client at a methadone treatment center eight years ago. I can relate to going to NA meetings and not being totally drug-free. I was not sure what I expected from NA. I just knew that people I had used with were members and were living a new way of life. I just knew that I wanted that way of life.

I heard about NA from detox and the treatment facility I was in. I had started attending meetings while still on methadone and continued to attend that way for about six months. I did not collect key tags for a simple

reason: I was still taking a mood-altering substance (methadone). But I attended meetings every day, and even had two home groups.

Neither group would allow me to share. I was the still-suffering addict, and therefore needed to hear the message. I didn't have one to share. I was allowed to share my progress on getting completely clean. I would say something like, "I've taken a reduction this week." I had the desire to stop using, and that's what I eventually did. During the time I was going to meetings and still on methadone, I didn't use illegal drugs. I continued to take reductions so that I could be totally drug-free. No one chased me away. There were members who felt I shouldn't have joined a home group, but no one told me I couldn't be a member of NA. After all, how could they? I had a desire to stop using—the only requirement for membership.

The day I completed my detox, I got my twenty-four-hour key tag. It was great to have twenty-four hours clean.

Today I work in a methadone treatment facility as a counselor and I have information about NA in my office. If clients ask about NA, I tell them to go to meetings. I tell them that recovery works if they're willing to work it. We also have an H&I NA meeting at this facility.

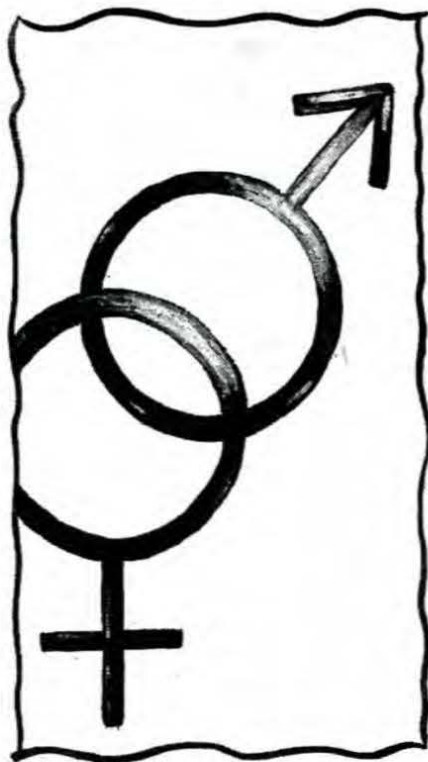
Thank you, World Service Board, for submitting this article. Addicts need to be reassured that recovery is there for them no matter what brings them to a meeting. We should not exclude anyone.

LP, Pennsylvania

Should my sponsor be a man or a woman (if I am gay)?

Our information pamphlet, "Sponsorship," addresses the issue of whether one's sponsor should be a man or a woman by stating, "... members of the same sex better understand certain issues such as sexuality, family or identity problems, relationship problems, etc." The pamphlet adds that opposite-sex sponsorship relationships run the risk of getting involved emotionally (read sexually?) and that this distracts from the program. These two principles, which I interpret as based on (1) identification and (2) avoidance of a confusing relationship (don't sponsor potential sexual partners), come together well for heterosexual members of our fellowship.

But what if I am a gay man? Should I have a gay male sponsor? This would perhaps create strong identification, but would run the risk of me finding my sponsor sexually attractive and getting distracted. If I pick a straight woman, we identify at the level of whom we pick as partners and we avoid the risk (on my part anyway) of sexual/emotional entanglement. But straight women have no experience regarding what it's like growing up gay or male in our society. If I pick a lesbian to sponsor me, there are similar hits and misses regarding identification with no risk of distraction due to sexual/emotional involvement. Finally, if I ask a straight male to sponsor me, we are both men, which



may or not create some sexual tension for me, but there is a problem with identification and the risk of his conscious or subconscious homophobia. Lesbians have similar, though not identical, conflicts.

Although I have been told that spiritual principles do not conflict, it does seem that they do in this case. It would be helpful if those with experience in this area would share it. Now that there is discussion of expanding our pamphlet on sponsorship, this would seem to be the perfect time to address this issue. Specifically, it would be helpful to hear what other spiritual principles apply in selecting a sponsor. Are there some spiritual principles that take precedence over others? Are there solutions to deal with the probable compromise of spiritual principles that may occur in this situation?

Recently a gay friend with a straight male sponsor told me that he uses his sponsor for help with working the steps to stay clean, but relies on gay friends to address relationship issues or sexuality.

Our fellowship felt that the issue of distracting "emotional bonds" based upon gender is one of the few areas that creates a prohibition regarding sponsorship. If our fellowship truly means to welcome all, regardless of sexual orientation, it is important for us to be sensitive to conflicts that our literature, in its heterosexual bias, creates.

CP, California

On children in meetings

I recently read a letter in a local newsletter on the topic of children attending NA meetings. It was obvious from the tone of the article that its author was angry, but he also raised some valid issues that I would personally like to respond to.

In light of the fact that I am a single mother, I was upset when I first read this letter. Those of us who are parents know that there are times when

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we need a meeting, and we have no other choice but to bring the children with us. However, we have a responsibility to watch our children and not use the meeting as a baby-sitter. When my child was younger, if he couldn't settle down, that was my cue to take him outside. It never failed: Someone would follow us outside, and I would still have a chance to share.

Sometimes I just need to see some friendly faces. I don't even have to be in the actual meeting. I just need contact with other recovering addicts, and I need some hugs.

I too have been in meetings where I've seen parents watching their children noisily acting out. I have watched people get up and leave meetings because in order to share we had to shout over the children. Thank God that hasn't been very often.

However, when a man shared with me that my child was the reason he kept coming back—because this child accepted him so unconditionally when he was feeling so unlovable—it was then that I came to believe there is a place for our children at our meetings. When my child shares with me that he knows that he never has to use drugs because “drugs are death disguised as a good time” and because he is proud to be “a child of the program,” then I know in my heart that I will continue to bring my child to meetings.

The question here is this: Could my child have obtained this knowledge if he hadn't attended meetings with me? Probably, because my circle of friends are mostly recovering addicts. But who can say for sure that he could have learned the degree of caring and shar-

ing that he has just from school or staying home with a baby-sitter? One thing is for certain: I have rarely censored my sharing at meetings, nor have I encouraged others to do so. If he can't listen to it, then maybe I should be sharing it with my sponsor instead.

For me, it is fascinating to watch how the children gravitate toward each other, and how quickly their friendships are started. They are great examples for us. My child has even taught some of the children to behave as well. I am just a little more in touch with my Higher Power when I am reminded of the healing that takes place in families, and I can see it firsthand when parents bring their children to meetings once in a while. There is more than one side to this issue. You have to remember that there are people in our fellowship who do not like children, and I have to respect their choice as well. So, I have learned along the way which meetings welcome children and which ones do not. It boils down to this: There must be a responsible adult watching out for children if they are brought to meetings, and there are many positive reasons why children belong.

MM, California

From our readers



In sorrow

This is a deadly disease we have. I just got off the phone with one of my friends from WCNA-26. One of “us” is no longer alive. I didn't know the addict who died. I just know that he died from this disease.

He died the same way my buddy, Steve, died in 1994. I remember the night I met Steve. One night this guy with a long ponytail and a cool tie-dyed shirt came to one of the meetings I always went to. He introduced me to Steve, his buddy from way back. This guy wouldn't hurt a fly, would give you the shirt off his back, and always made us laugh, and he was just like the addict I heard about a couple of minutes ago. They used drugs and they died. I remember the hurt I felt when I heard about his death. I remember the tears welling up at his burial ceremony. I remember me and my buddy visiting his grave, and realizing that he made us laugh a lot and that he was a good person. But he was an addict, and couldn't stay clean, and he died. Steve would have made everyone who reads this laugh, but he can't because he's dead. Burying someone whom I never saw high hurts a lot. I know how my friend from WCNA-26 feels. It's a sense of loss—the loss of a friend who's never

going to say hello or good-bye again. It's the loss of that hug, not only that NA hug, but the hug of a friend on top of that. We don't have to die from active addiction today. That's what “just for today” means, right now, to me. We don't have to die today.

Narcotics Anonymous has given me my life back today because I was shown by the recovering addicts who have come before me *how not to die a day at a time, and then how to start to live this way, the NA Way*. If no one has told you today, let me be the first one to tell you that I love you. Keep coming back. Please.

WC, Ohio

Close calls

I have been clean since 1986 and have learned what the word *complacent* means. Sometimes I start thinking I have a handle on this deal, but that is a bad place for me to be. I guess I need to be reminded that I'm not the one who should take credit for my recovery; my Higher Power should.

I have had two experiences where I have come close to using and have had what some people call divine intervention.

The first was when I had two years clean. I had just started a new job. I was counting out what I had in the cash register when this girl sat a beer

down in front of me. I didn't think about being an addict at all. That was the farthest thing from my mind. I thought, how nice, someone gave me something. I had the beer two inches from my lips before I realized, "Hey, I am an addict. I can't drink this." Where did that thought come from? I hadn't thought much about being an addict that day, but I have gotten into the habit of praying daily and I believe that is what brought that idea to my head.

Now about what happened today. I had a rotten tooth. I needed a root canal. I went to the dentist. It wasn't my regular dentist. They did some of the work and gave me a prescription for some heavy pain pills. I did not tell them I was a recovering addict. My addict mind was already set in motion. I walked across the street and got the prescription filled. The pharmacist told me to eat first before taking them. So I went and got some food, went home, and started eating.

On my table was a copy of *The NA Way*. I started reading it. There was a lot of stuff about the First Step. Just what I needed.

It got me thinking about my disease. I started thinking that I am able to eat now, and I wasn't before I went to the dentist. I didn't need pain killers then; why do I need them now? Even with ten years clean, I am still an addict with an addict mind.

When I first got clean, that monster in me would first scream at me to use. I asked my sponsor if it would ever go away. He said it wouldn't be so loud and demanding, but it gets quiet and soft and very subtle. He told me it would get a lot more clever.

That is the truth. Before I started to read my *NA Way*, I was thinking about how I was going to take my pills. After reading it, I decided I didn't need them. Thank you for being there.

MK, Oklahoma



Comin'up

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

CANADA

British Columbia: 25-27 July; British Columbia Regional Convention; Campbell River's Sportsplex; info: (250) 923-0787; email: msole@oberon.ark.com; write: BCRCNA-18, PO Box 912, Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada V9W 6Y4

2) 31 Oct. - 2 Nov.; Pacific Northwest Regional Convention; Renaissance Vancouver Hotel Harborside; rsvns: (604) 689-9211; info: (604) 327-0928 or (604) 278-6595; write: PNWCNA, PO Box 78042, 2606 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V5N 4C0

Manitoba: 13-15 June; Winnipeg Area Convention; Broadway Community Center; Winnipeg; info: (204) 774-2440 or (204) 775-9241

New Brunswick: 13-15 June; New Brunswick Area Convention; Keddy's Inn and Convention Centre, Fredericton; rsvns: (506) 454-4461 or (800) 561-7666; write: NBACC, PO Box 20064, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 6Y8

2) 4-5 July; 5th Annual Fun in Recovery; write: GWTFASCNA, PO Box 20082, Brunswick Square, St. John, New Brunswick, Canada E2L 5B2

Nova Scotia: 15-17 Aug.; Annapolis Valley Area Pig Roast and Campout, Blomidon Provincial Park; info: (902) 582-3037 or (902) 680-0326; write: AVANA, PO Box 522, Kentville, Nova Scotia, Canada B4N 3X3

Ontario: 29-31 Aug.; Canadian Convention of NA; Ottawa; Citadel Hotel, Ottawa; rsvns: (800) 567-3600; info: (613) 829-3231 or (613) 526-5937 or (613) 236-4674; write: CCNA-7, PO Box 929, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5P9

Quebec: 28-30 Nov.; Quebec English Area 10th Anniversary Convention; Ruby Foo's Hotel, Montreal; rsvns: (514) 731-7701; info: (514) 767-1641 or (514) 691-6586

IRELAND

Cork: 18-20 July; Southern Area Summer Convention; Lough Community Centre, Cork City; info: 353/21/278411; write: Southern Area of Ireland, PO Box 89, Cork City, Ireland

Dublin: 17-19 Oct.; 13th Irish Regional Convention; The Grand Hotel, Malahide; write: IRCNA-13, PO Box 1368, Cardiff Lane, Dublin 1, Ireland

ISRAEL

Haifa: 4-7 Sept.; 14th European Convention and Conference; Exhibition Convention Center, Haifa; info: 972/3/6762203; fax: 972/3/7526888; email: u-val@spotnik.com; write: Israel RSO, PO Box 19246, Tel Aviv, 61190 Israel

JAPAN

Honshu: 15-17 Aug.; 1st Chuba Area Convention; Nagoya, Japan; info: 81/52/5326735; fax: 81/561722698; write: Aichiken-Mihama-Shone, Nshizen-No. 1E, 1-1 Owazaonourawaza, Miyako, Mihama Chita, Japan

NORWAY

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

SWEDEN

Sundsvall: 20-22 June; 9th Swedish Midsummer Convention; info: 46/60/170420; website: <http://hem1.passagen.se/freddeo/na/konvent/htm>; email: aka.helborg@sundsvall.mail.telia.com

UNITED KINGDOM

England: 8-10 Aug.; United Kingdom Convention; Metropole Hotel, National Exhibition Center, Birmingham; email: 100417.3606@Compuserve.com

UNITED STATES

Alabama: 20-22 Mar. 1998; Greater Mobile Area Convention; Clarion Hotel, Mobile; rsvns: (800) 982-9822; info: (334) 471-9723; write: GMACNA, PO Box 9622, Mobile, AL 36691

Arkansas: 20-22 June; 13th Beaver Round-Up; Buffalo Point National Park, Yellville; info: (501) 925-1123 or (501) 587-9628

2) 4-6 July; Central Arkansas Area Convention; Riverfront Hilton Inn, North Little Rock; rsvns: (501) 371-9000; info: (501) 221-1909; write: CAACNA, PO Box 250516, Little Rock, AR 72225

California: 13-15 June; San Diego/Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego Concourse/Radisson Harbor View; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (619) 239-6800; info: (619) 465-7662 or (619) 696-9220

2) 22 June; Westside Area Blues Fest; Rose Garden, Veteran's Medical Center, Los Angeles; info: (310) 822-4034 or (310) 559-6111 or (310) 204-4618

3) 3-6 July; Western States Unity Convention; Riveria Resort, Palm Springs; rsvns: (800) 444-8311; info: (619) 320-4023; write: WSUC, PO Box 399, San Jacinto, CA 92581

4) 24-26 Oct.; Western States PI and H&I Learning Days; Crowne Plaza San Francisco Airport, Burlingame; rsvns: (415) 340-8500 or (800) 227-6963; info: (510) 609-6870 or (510) 833-8343; email: 75207.3543@compuserve.com; write: WSLD, PO Box 2427, San Rafael, CA 94912

Connecticut: 6-8 June; Greater Waterbury Area Campout; Lone Oaks Campsites, Rt. 44, East Canaan

2) 26-28 Sept.; United Shoreline Area Spiritual Weekend; Enders Island, Mystic; info: (860) 767-3299; write: Spiritual Weekend, PO Box 354, Centerbrook, CT 06409

Delaware: 4-6 July; Small Wonder Area Convention; University of Delaware Clayton Hall; info: (302) 427-0151; write: SWACNA, PO Box 808, Wilmington, DE 19899

District of Columbia: 21 June 1997; DC Area H&I Workshop; Howard University, Blackburn Center; info: (202) 672-0499

Florida: 3-6 July; Florida Regional Convention; Grenelefe Resort, Grenelefe; rsvns: (941) 422-7511 or (800) 237-9549; info: (904) 428-2939 or (941) 701-9233; write: FRCNA-16, c/o RSO, 2940 W. Columbus Drive, Tampa, FL 33607

2) 3-5 Oct.; Uncoast Area Convention; Holiday Inn Sunspree, Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (904) 462-0799 or (352) 335-4092 or (352) 371-7918; email: mikek@gnv.fdt.net; write: UCACNA, PO Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

3) 14-16 Nov.; New Path & Rainbows Group's Rainbow Weekend; Holiday Inn, Ft. Lauderdale Beach; rsvns: (954) 569-5961; info: (954) 768-9748 or (954) 523-0520; email: bcftl@aol.com; write: Rainbow Weekend, PO Box 23837, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

Georgia: 11-13 July; Piedmont Area 15th Anniversary; Holiday Inn, Forsyth; rsvns: (888) 2FORSYTH; info: (912) 788-4311 or (912) 784-7625; write: PASC, PO Box 4362, Macon, GA 31208

Hawaii: 12-14 Sept.; Maui Area Gathering of the Fellowship; Camp Keanae, Maui; info: (808) 879-6412; email: chas@t-link.net; write: Gathering, PO Box 3002, Kahului, HI 96732

2) 30 Oct. - 2 Nov.; 6th Hawaii Regional Convention; Kona Surf Resort; info: (808) 325-6470 or (808) 328-8467

Idaho: 25-27 July; High Desert Area's Serenity in the Wilderness; Sawtooth Mountain Wilderness, Chemeketan Group Site, 25 miles southeast of Stanley; email: branson@primenet.com

Illinois: 20-22 June; Joliet Area Convention; Holiday Inn Express, Joliet; info: (815) 774-0065 or (815) 729-0262; write: JACNA, PO Box 336, Joliet, IL 60434

2) 27-29 June; BANANAS Area Campout; Comiara Park, Evergreen Lake, Hudson; info: (309) 392-2602 or (309) 828-8705; email: hal3@aol.com; write: BANANAS, PO Box 3093, Bloomington, IL 61702

3) 11-13 July; Greater Illinois Regional Campout; Weldon Springs State Recreation Area, Black Locust Group Camp Site, Clinton; info: (217) 493-2172 or (309) 392-2609; email: hal3@aol.com; write: GIRSCNA, PO Box 6326, Peoria, IL 61601

4) 28-31 Aug.; South City Area Convention; Holiday Inn-Mart Plaza, Chicago; rsvns: (312) 836-5000; info: (773) 651-6231 or (773) 821-5646; write: NASCAC-2, PO Box 166272, Chicago, IL 60616

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

Kansas: 27-29 June; Mirror of Miracles; Sycamore Valley Resort, Wyandotte; info: (316) 232-1896 or (316) 429-5531

Louisiana: 28-31 Aug.; New Orleans Area Convention; New Orleans Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (504) 889-1304; write: NOACNA, PO Box 51196, New Orleans, LA 70151-1196

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

Michigan: 3-6 July; Michigan Regional Convention; Valley Plaza Resort, Midland; rsvns: (800) 825-2700, mention Group #G5275; info: (517) 548-4043; write: MRCNA, Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

Minnesota: 13-15 June; Southern Minnesota Area Recovery Blast; Ramada Inn, Owatonna; rsvns: (800) 272-6232 or (507) 455-0606; info: (507) 444-9852; email: dans@ll.net; registration form on www.angelfire.com/narocks

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

2) 25-27 July; Ozark Area High on Life Picnic; Clinton; info: (417) 776-2819

Montana: 13-15 June; 9th Annual NA Gathering and Campout; Rocking J Campground, Monarch; info: (406) 771-7926 or (406) 453-7557

Nebraska: 13-15 June; South East Nebraska Area Spiritual Reality Area Campout; Grandpa's Woods; info: (402) 994-2100

Nevada: 18-20 July; California-Arizona-Nevada Area Convention; Riverside Resort, Laughlin; rsvns: (800) 227-3849; info: (520) 768-1316 or (520) 763-0003 or (520) 754-4260; write: CANAC, PO Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439

2) 31 July - 3 Aug.; 1st Las Vegas Convention; Bally's; rsvns: (800) 833-3308; info: (702) 896-0130 or (702) 263-0336 or (702) 453-3713; email: elvana@lvnexus.net; write: LVCNA, PO Box 12717, Las Vegas, NV 89112

3) 3-5 Oct.; Reno Convention; Peppermill Hotel & Casino, Reno; info: (702) 746-9357 or (702) 323-8336 or (702) 356-9217

New Hampshire: 20-23 June; 7th Fellowship in the Field; Apple Hill Campground, Bethlehem; info: (603) 645-4777

New Jersey: 13-15 June; United Area Convention; Governor Morris Hotel, Morristown; rsvns: (800) 221-0241; info: (201) 794-2364 or (201) 342-7084

2) 25-27 July; 7th Northern New Jersey Regional Convention; Doubletree Hotel, Somerset; rsvns: (800) 222-8733; info: (201) 676-4481 or (201) 509-2926; write: NNJRC, PO Box 1019, Maplewood, NJ 07040

New York: 1-3 Aug.; Northern New York Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, East Syracuse; rsvns: (315) 437-2761; info: (716) 266-0221 or (716) 288-7232; write: NNYRCNA, PO Box 1425, Rochester, NY 14603

2) 29-31 Aug.; ABCD Area Convention; Omni Hotel, Albany; rsvns: (800) THE-OMNI; info: (518) 427-9568 or (518) 432-8721; write: ABCD-ACNA, PO Box 71, Albany, NY 12201

3) 29-31 Aug.; Buffalo Area's Recovery in the Woods; Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Angola; info: (716) 881-6317; write: Recovery in the Woods, PO Box 22, Buffalo, NY 14207

4) 10-12 Oct.; Western New York Regional Convention; Fallside Resort, Niagara Falls; rsvns: (800) 519-9911 or (716) 285-2541; info: (716) 875-0548; write: WNYRCNA, PO Box 151, Buffalo, NY 14207-0151

North Carolina: 18-20 July; New Hope Area Convention; Omni Durham Hotel & Convention Center; rsvns: (800) THE-OMNI or (919) 683-6664; info: (919) 479-1225 or (919) 220-8080 or (919) 572-0246 or (919) 687-4709; write: NHACNA, PO Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

2) 5-7 Sept.; Central Piedmont Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Salisbury; info: (704) 638-9027 or (704) 637-0651; write: CPANA, PO Box 1294, Mooresville, NC 28115

Ohio: 1-3 Aug.; 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; write: Tri-Area 3, PO Box 999, Shaker Heights, OH 44122

Pennsylvania: 7-9 Nov.; Williamsport Area Convention; Sheraton Inn, Williamsport; info: (717) 323-8626

Puerto Rico: 11-13 July; Unidos Podemos 8; Isla Verde; rsvns: (800) 544-3008; info: (787) 274-0488 or (787) 749-9583; write: Comité de Convenciones, PO Box 362313, San Juan, PR 00936

Tennessee: 13-15 June; Clean and Crazy Group Spiritual Retreat; Ft. Campbell Army Travel Camp, Clarksville; info: (615) 647-9043 or (615) 905-1428

2) 26-30 Nov.; Volunteer Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency, Knoxville; rsvns: (800) 243-2546; info: (423) 523-4710; write: VRC-15, PO Box 38, Afton, TN 37616

Utah: 6-8 June; 11th Annual Celebration of Recovery; American Legion Hall, Vernal; info: (801) 789-4836 or (801) 789-5504

2) 18-20 July; 14th Utah Regional Campvention; Whittings Campground, Mapleton; info: (801) 476-7330 or (801) 491-9460 or (801) 489-8326; write: Campvention, PO Box 994, Springville, UT 84663

Vermont: 15-17 Aug.; Back to Basics 13; Walling Pond Boys Camp, Wallingford; info: (802) 773-5575

Virginia: 13-15 June; Piedmont Area Campout; Shenandoah Acres Resort, Stuarts Draft; Campground: (540) 337-1911; info: (804) 923-4544

2) 8-10 Aug.; Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4-H Center, Front Royal; info: (304) 262-2580 or (540) 888-3195; write: AHACNA, PO Box 1761, Martinsburg, WV 25402

Washington: 14-15 Nov.; Washington/North Idaho Regional H&I Learning Days; Grays Harbor Church of the Nazarene, Hoquiam; info: (360) 533-1367 or (360) 532-1719; write: Learning Days, PO Box 374, Hoquiam, WA 98550

Wisconsin: 11-13 July; Never Alone in the Woods Campout; Manitowoc; info: (414) 686-0263 or (414) 684-9233

2) 20-21 Sept.; Wisconsin Regional Service Conference; The Mead Inn, Wisconsin Rapids; rsvns: (800) 843-6323 or (715) 423-1500; info: (715) 424-3037 or (715) 421-4890

3) 24-26 Oct.; Wisconsin State Convention; Racine Marriott; rsvns: (800) 228-9290 or (414) 886-6100; info: (414) 656-9733 or (414) 697-3496 or (414) 652-0178 or (414) 654-6128 or (414) 551-9121; web site: cnspermy@acronet.net; write: WSNAC-14, PO Box 365, Kenosha, WI 53141

Wyoming: 26-28 Sept.; Convention of Unity of Narcotics Anonymous; Rawlins; info: (307) 362-9418; e-mail: johnt@wyoming.com; write: CUNA-6, PO Box 445, Evanston, WY 82931

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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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