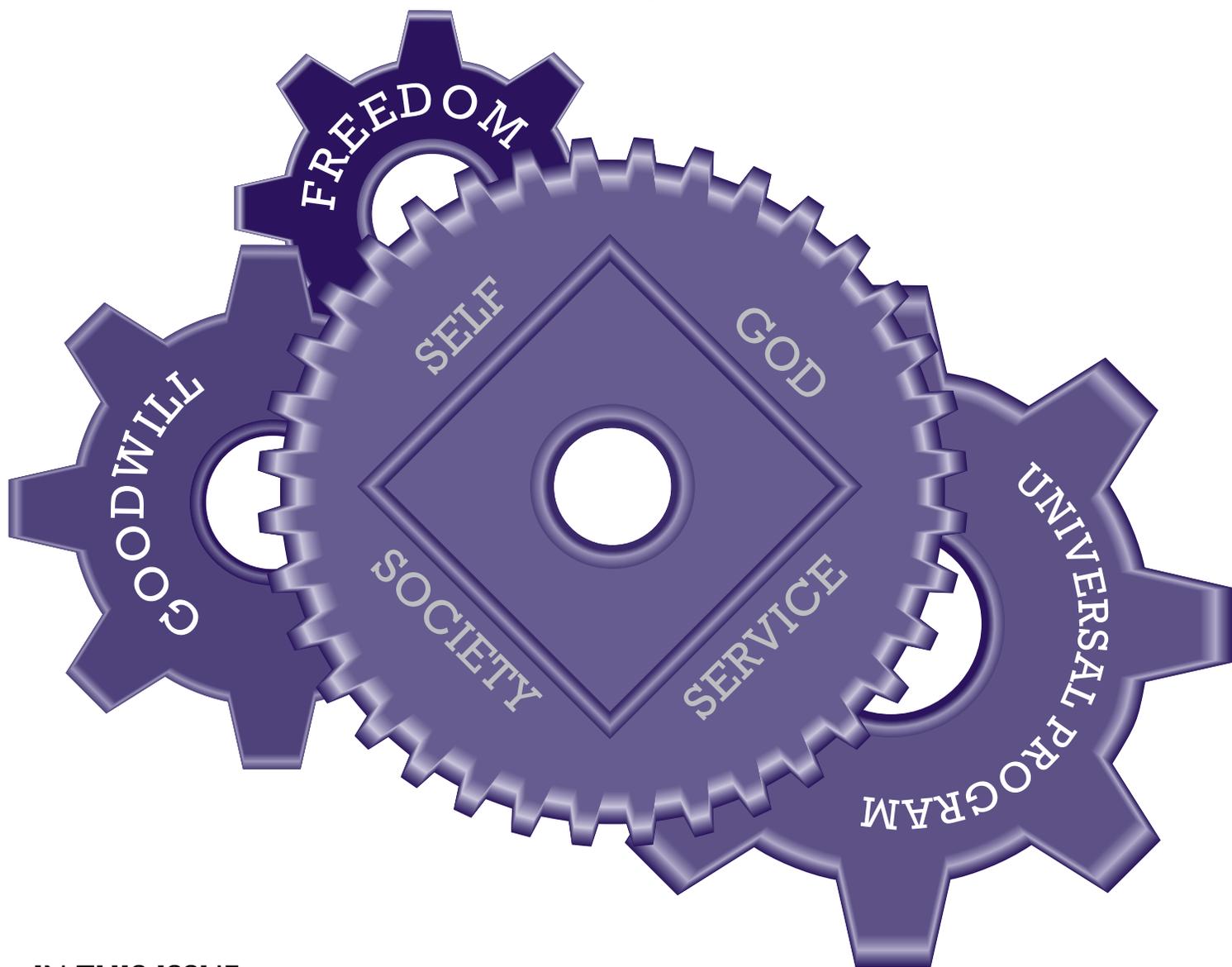


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EDITOR

Nancy Schenck

COPY EDITORS

David Fulk
Lee Manchester

TYPOGRAPHY AND DESIGN

David Mizrahi

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Fatia Birault

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Tom McC, Dana H, Marc S, Sheryl L

World Service Office

PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA
Telephone: (818) 773-9999
Fax: (818) 700-0700
Website: www.na.org

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From the editor

Happy 2004! This year marks *The NA Way Magazine's* twenty-first year. I have always felt a special kinship with our magazine since we share the same "birth" year, so to speak. *The NA Way* launched its inaugural issue in September 1982, and my clean date is at the end of November 1982. The coincidence that I am now the editor of this special magazine does not escape me.

Working on this issue was particularly uplifting and inspiring. Every article filled me with hope and a sense of pride, knowing that each member had changed dramatically from when he or she came into NA. I hear in meetings all the time about how lives change, often quite dramatically, after getting clean and living in recovery.

You see, when I got clean I was living in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. At the age of thirty-one I was working as a nurse and did not have a clue as to what I wanted to do when I "grew up." I did not think for one minute that, twenty-one years later, I would be living in California and working for the fellowship that had given me back my life—but here I am, doing exactly that!

Speaking of dramatic changes, I just returned from a visit with my son and his family. We had a blast, especially taking my precious two-year-old granddaughter out trick-or-treating on Halloween. We were all dressed in ridiculous costumes, and I honestly cannot remember ever having so much fun before! I never thought participating in a simple festivity would bring me such joy or as many belly laughs as it did.

I hope you enjoy reading these stories as much as I did. Please let us know your thoughts about the magazine. It is a team project, and we cannot do it without support and interest from you. We want to wish everyone a healthy and serene year filled with positive changes and dreams that come true.

Nancy S, Editor

Because of a lack of letters to H&I Slim, we will not feature the column in this issue. However, rest assured that Slim will be back in April offering more of his sage suggestions.

The NA Way Magazine welcomes letters from all readers. Letters to the editor can respond to any article that has appeared in *The NA Way*, or can simply be a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship. Letters should be no more than 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All letters must include a signature, valid address, and phone number. First name and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.

The NA Way Magazine, published in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, belongs to the members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission, therefore, is to provide each member with recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment, which speaks to current issues and events relevant to each of our members worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff is dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around the world, as well as providing current service and convention information. Foremost, the journal is dedicated to the celebration of our message of recovery—"that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."



This tiresome thing called recovery

Boring.

Boring and smelly.

Boring, smelly, and religious.

How boring is that?

That is how my inner addict dismissed getting help the day a friend pointed out the church where an NA group met. If reaching out for help meant a life of hanging out in church basements with cigarette-smoking, coffee-swilling people talking about God and how to be "productive members of society," I would continue to use, thank you very much.

About that same time I sold my television, buying a new one equipped with remote control. My addiction had reached the point where I was not willing to leave my drugs long enough to walk across the room and change the channel. Day and night I had sat glued to my chair, drugging myself into a stupor, and watching the same channel. As I saw it, the problem was not my relationship to drugs. The problem was that my television did not have a remote control.

The whole time I told myself that being in recovery would be boring, my addiction kept me from asking myself the obvious question: "What could possibly be more boring than sitting in the same chair, doing the same drugs, watching television 'til I pass out?"

Eventually, despite misgivings about coffee-drinking, cigarette-smoking Twelve Step-pers, I found my way down those basement stairs. Slowly it dawned on me that boring recoveries are optional. Boring people have boring recoveries. If my recovery was boring, that was about me, not about recovery. I decided then and there to turn things around; I promised myself that I would have an interesting recovery.

When I was one year clean, I quit my job as a laborer in an iron ore mine, switching to a job that offered a future. At four years clean, indulging a long-held dream, I took my first trip to Europe.

Five years clean found me back in college, and in my eighth year of recovery I graduated with a master's degree. At nine years, I joined the United States Peace Corps' Business Development program, moved to Krakow, and learned to speak Polish.

It struck me as paradoxical that as a result of working hard to get an education, by becoming a productive member of society, by doing my part to help the Poles move to a market-driven economy, I was having the time of my life, enjoying more adventures than I ever imagined possible.

Since then I have visited nearly thirty countries. I have crawled inside the burial chamber of the Great Pyramid of Giza, peered into Mongolia from atop the Great Wall of China, and backpacked through Russia. I have sailed in the South China Sea, hiked Finland's Arctic tundra, and ridden camels in the Sahara Desert. I have enjoyed the sights, tastes, and smells of cities as far-flung as Reykjavik, Cairo, Venice, Moscow, Beijing, Istanbul, Stockholm, Casablanca, Macao, Budapest, Manhattan, Vienna, Hong Kong, Tallinn, Singapore, Riga, Berlin, Charlotte Amalie, Prague, and many, many more.

A few months ago I gave in to my friends' urging. They decided that as a manager in a major insurance company it was time I bought my first house. Setting my fear aside, I leaned on my Higher Power and took the plunge. With design assistance from a friend twenty years clean, and earthmoving help from a man I sponsor, I completely landscaped my front yard.

The woman who delivers the morning paper, the first grader who lives across the street, the man who delivers the mail, and even the trash collector have all stopped to tell me how much they appreciate the beauty my new gardens contribute to the neighborhood.

Yes, the guy who would not get off his chair to change the television channel is now planning his next trip: to India and Nepal. I will always be grateful to the people in that church basement who looked beyond how boring I was and welcomed me into the circle.

Kit E, Minnesota, USA

Our readers write

Dear NA Way,

My name is Kevin, and I am a grateful, recovering addict.

It has become customary for NA home groups in my area to open meetings with the Serenity Prayer. This might be because enough of our fellowship deems it appropriate to open their meetings in this way. Each group has the freedom to choose what the content of their meeting is, just as each member of a group has the freedom to choose whether or not to become involved and attempt to influence what the group's meeting content is.

While a member may not care for a reading or a prayer that is used to open their meeting, it does seem a bit excessive to initiate a campaign to eliminate the Serenity Prayer from *all* Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

It was suggested in the article titled "The Internal Solution" (July 2003—Volume 20, Number 3) that the Serenity Prayer is in conflict with the principle of change. To me, "the serenity to accept the things I cannot change" does not imply an inability to change my environment. It is acknowledging that there are things in life that I cannot change. Many members think one of the things that cannot be changed is the fact that we are addicts. For me, this certainly seems to be something we cannot change, and it seems wise to accept this.

The concept of not being able to change or of being powerless is also suggested by our First Step: "We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable." The fact that the Serenity Prayer asks for "courage to change the things I can" suggests that certain things can be changed, and that one way change can take place is with courage. However, I still need to have a realistic outlook concerning what can and cannot be changed and "the wisdom to know the difference." My outlook can change repeatedly, which is why it is a good idea for me to recite the Serenity Prayer regularly.

Despite shifts in ideology concerning whether God is internal or external to ourselves, the program specifically states in Step Eleven that our Higher Power is "God, as we understood Him." That means I have the freedom to choose my individual understanding of what or who God is. If my Higher Power is external, that does not make him any less of a positive influence or source of spiritual awakening for me. In a like manner, serenity or wisdom and courage are no less effective in recovery when granted from an external source than when from an internal source.

Denying the validity of all external solutions simply because *drugs* were an external solution would make no sense. Meetings, sponsors, fellow addicts, newcomers, NA literature—all these "external solutions" have been proven, over and over again, to be essential to successful recovery.

Serenity, courage, and wisdom are qualities that are exhibited through my behavior. These qualities demand my ongoing, daily, repetitive commitment; they are qualities to be developed, not ones that we either have or do not have. I can be serene, courageous, and wise at one moment and chaotic, cowardly, and ignorant the next.

The repetitive nature of reciting the Serenity Prayer demonstrates that I must repeatedly strive to express these principles in my thoughts, words, and actions—each and every minute, hour, and day. Serenity helps me improve my conscious contact with the God of my understanding. Wisdom helps me know what God's will is. And courage helps me to do His will. Trying to stay clean and actively recover from addiction without serenity, courage, and wisdom is like trying to build a house without a hammer, saw, and nails. Any job is easier with the proper tools.

It may be true that knowledge is the result of experience. For me, experience is gained through my daily interaction with other people and the external world around me. A Higher Power can affect where I go and what I experience.

A Higher Power can work through others to teach me. For me, then, repeatedly asking God for serenity, courage, and wisdom is like asking God to guide



I think my sponsor approves

My sponsor died.

Bob C and I were closer than I ever thought two people could be. We shared our joys, sorrows, problems, and solutions. I had known him for about a year and a half when I asked him to be my sponsor. He told me, "I will be your sponsor on two conditions: One, that you are willing to work the steps. Two, that you call me every day."

I held to half of the commitment. I called him every day. I did not work the steps. I made a couple of half-hearted attempts but just could not get serious about it.

I had survived more than forty years, thirty of them suffering from active addiction. I knew how to live life on life's terms. Only one problem: The terms of a junkie's life address nothing but the life of a junkie.

I stopped going to meetings, stopped calling my sponsor every day, and started hanging around with my old "friends." Needless to say, in a very short time I went out.

When I came to my senses, I gave Bob a call and asked if I could come down to see him.

At the time we were living in a beach city in California (USA). I had an apartment downtown, and Bob lived aboard his sailboat in the harbor.

When I came aboard, he made a pot of coffee. I did not say much until the mugs were warming our hands. The conversation went like this:

"Bob, I guess you heard that I went out."

"Yeah, I heard you'd been trying to kill yourself again. Are you ready to start working the steps now?"

"Yes, I am."

We started. We worked all twelve steps, thoroughly and in order. I say "we" because, while I did the work, Bob was right there beside me all the way, guiding, encouraging, prodding (a lot of prodding), and providing me with his experience, strength, and hope.

When we were through, I said something like "Whew, I'm glad that's over." Bob told me, "It's just begun. It's never over."

Bob ran it all down to me like this:

"See, the Twelfth Step says, '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.'

"What's the message?"

"One, that I was powerless over my addiction. Two, that there is a power greater than myself that can relieve me of the insanity that leads me to take that first drug. Three, that I can abandon my life to the care and keeping of God, and that this loving, caring God gives me the power to stay clean.

"In a nutshell, that's the answer to the question of how to stay clean.

"Now, having acknowledged these three basic principles, you are at Step Four, and you just keep going on from there."

I kept on doing the steps over and over. Doing that has led me to believe today that the program of Narcotics Anonymous is the steps.

In my twelfth year of recovery, Bob contracted cancer. When it became clear to both of us that it was terminal, we talked about it: death, the afterlife, and the present life. We came to the conclusion that life is worth living clean—even with cancer.

During Bob's last year, I moved to Montana to pursue my career. Because of the long-distance telephone bill, I was unable to call him every day, but once a week we were on the phone with each other.

*Those who work
the steps recover.
Those who don't,
don't. All I can do is
share my
experience,
strength, and hope.*

Then one night in my thirteenth year, I got the phone call from Bob's daughter: "He's gone."

We wept and consoled each other as best we could.

They scattered Bob's ashes in the sea he loved so well, and our lives went on.

About a month later, at our regular phone time, I was feeling particularly blue and called out, "Oh, Bob, what am I ever going to do without my sponsor?"

The answer came in my ear, as plain as day, in Bob's voice:

"Lee, I have given you all that I can. I showed you the steps and taught you how to live by the traditions. I can't give you any more. Now it's your turn. Carry the message. See you when you get here."

I never heard from Bob again. I think about him from time to time and always have a warm feeling.

I have been clean now for more than twenty years, and I sponsor a number of

addicts. Those who work the steps recover. Those who don't, don't. All I can do is share my experience, strength, and hope.

When I need someone to share some of life's burdens with, I have the guys I sponsor. One of the tenets of NA is "one addict helping another." Even though I may be an oldtimer, my length of recovery is the same as everyone else's: twenty-four hours.

More importantly, I have the gifts Narcotics Anonymous has given me: God, the steps, and the fellowship.

I think my sponsor approves.

Lee A, Montana, USA

Watching a newcomer

I have been watching this particular newcomer for the last twenty-nine days, and it has been wonderful watching her learn and grow and become involved. She got a sponsor and a coffee commitment.

She reads *Just for Today* every morning and the Basic Text every night. She shares at meetings, and she reaches out, too. I have had many listening sessions with this person, trying only to share about what the program and recovery mean to me—you know, my experience, strength, and hope. Things seem to be going well for this newcomer, feelings and all.

Today this person got an email suggesting that she drop everything and go to another state for a dream job. As I watched the excitement escalate in my fellow addict, I could not help but wonder, "What about your recovery? What about your daughter? What happened to 'just for today'?"

I pondered all this for a moment. Then I remembered my own journey.

There was a time in my recovery when I decided to put money and education and even service ahead of my own recovery. There were people who tried to point this out to me, but at the time I could not hear.

Eventually I ended up relapsing, and my physical and spiritual health almost vanished completely, not to mention the

destruction I caused in my relationship and with my family.

There is a theme resonating through my mind these days: *Nothing*, absolutely nothing, is more important than my recovery today.

I know that without my recovery I will surely die. No job, no relationship, no fantasy or feeling is worth throwing away my recovery.

Today, my quality of life is far more important to me than the quantity of things I may be able to achieve for some short-lived period of time.

I do get frustrated sometimes, because things do not happen in my time or because I do not want to go through certain feelings, but I know better than that today.

Today I am grateful for my Higher Power, the NA Fellowship, and the steps and traditions, for without NA this addict has no life worth living.

Dawn W, California, USA

Straying away

Through my recovery I have come to realize where I have been, where I am now, and where I am going, assuming I continue to work my program to the best of my ability.

I remember being at a markedly productive place at nearly three years clean. I felt good about myself—being able to accomplish my goals and also maintain a spiritual way of life. I attribute that place of serenity to my God, Narcotics Anonymous, and myself.

Deep down I wanted to share my life with another person. I believed God was preparing that person for me and me for her, and that we would meet in God's time.

Well, somehow I got off track. I became interested in a person who I should not have been interested in. No one is perfect, but this was the beginning of my straying away from the NA program—that is, straying away from my self-respect, my good sense, and my God. I got lost!

I began to work the steps backwards. I wanted to spend as much time as I could with my new girlfriend. She lived in another town; I began to see her area

as a wonderful new place, and mine became a real drag. My meeting attendance dropped, which severely affected my involvement in the program.

For me, involvement in NA gives me freedom in recovery. If I truly want to do something for my recovery, I get involved, and I gain enjoyment through my involvement. I learn from it, apply it to my life more effectively, and become "a part of."

Unfortunately, my new involvement was skewed by an addict who does not understand what healthy involvement really is. I had found a "female fix." It lasted for over a year—I got my priorities all mixed up, and I ended up being in something apart from my recovery.

It is embarrassing to say, but sex became my release rather than the things that had brought me serenity in the past. Once again, I was trying to control my life by trying to control everything around me. I only felt satisfied with myself when I pleased her. This was the same emotional pain with which I came into the program.

I had given away the support system that my serenity depended upon: the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

While in this state of mind, I lost my job. This, in combination with the many breakups within my unhealthy relationship, sent me into a tailspin completely devoid of spirituality or serenity.

I only went to meetings here and there. Even when I was at a meeting, I was never really "there." I found myself thinking, "At least I am not drinking or using," which I always believed to be the very minimum I could receive from the program.

I sought employment and found a new position. It was a good job, but I had to work graveyard shifts. I had not stayed up all night since my using days, and it nearly ruined me. Staying up all night, obsessing on my recent relationship, was a great way to nurture my insanity—and it did not stop there.

I was offered another job, and I continued to work the job I already had. Now I worked two jobs, got three hours of sleep a day, and continued to ruminate over my lost female fix. I am talking maximum chaos! It was only what I had learned from the program that finally saved me.

One night, sitting alone at my computer, I found myself thinking how good

a bottle of tequila would be. Then I thought, "Tequila is a drug, period!" I looked at the clock, knew where an NA meeting was, and ran back to where recovery—and my sanity—were waiting.

I quit my night job, let go of my "female fix," and admitted my powerlessness once again.

I have stayed clean since 12 March 1994. I have managed to hold my job for five years now, and I love my life—even without a woman to share it with.

I am working a program. I have freedom not only from my addiction to drugs, but also from my obsessive-compulsive self, which almost tore me away from my program.

Thanks, NA, for being there and showing me how to stay clean.

Jack C., California, USA

Beyond boredom

Does being productive and responsible mean that I have to be boring?

No!

My name is Andrés. I am an addict, and I have been clean for fifteen years. In my early recovery, when I read these lines from our Basic Text for the first time, I felt joy: "The sooner the addict could face his problem in everyday living, just that much faster would he become a real productive citizen." (*Narcotics Anonymous*, page 85) I really wanted to become a productive member of society.

Before I came to NA I was responsible for my performance at school, vocational training, and university. Unfortunately, my performance was always mediocre, just good enough to get through exams and be admitted to the next grade. I did not know how to make it better or why I sometimes had good marks and sometimes not. I always wished to have good marks because I believed my mother loved me only when I made good marks. Therefore my self-esteem was just like my marks: bad.

I was doing very well at sports, and I tried to help with the housework at home, but all this could not compensate for being unable to achieve my main

task, which was to learn. As a result, I always felt that I was a loser, and I was afraid to fail again tomorrow because I did not know how to make it better.

At one point I quit school so I would not be faced with this failing any longer. Going to work and bringing money home gave me a certain sense of satisfaction for some time. But I found no fulfillment in being an unskilled worker. I still had this inner urge to study, so I went back to school.

For me, two fundamental symptoms of hitting rock bottom with drugs were that I no longer was able to memorize anything, and I was full of fear of people. Naturally, as a consequence, it was impossible to go to university or even to accomplish the simplest of jobs.

Through the experience, strength, and hope I found in NA, I was given the power to start my life anew. I decided not to accept any jobs outside of what I wanted to pursue as my career. I realized I wanted to receive some acknowledgment of my work, as well as more money. My idea of a career took place in the excitement of the publicity scene.

Since I did not change overnight, I lost several jobs during the first four years of my recovery and, from time to time, I even had to return to jobs not within my career field. But I managed to finish university and finally to be successful on the job. I was a "productive, responsible member of society," and it felt great! The amount of money I was making made me feel good. My bosses' acknowledgment made me feel good, and the company car and all the additional benefits made me look good.

My spirits rose. For the first time in my life I could fulfil the tasks given to me in a reliable and successful manner.

My self-esteem rose. I felt attractive. All of a sudden I gained the girls' attention.

I had more money than I needed, and the girls were seeking my company. Does this sound boring?

Granted, social acceptability does not equal recovery, but thank God the one does not exclude the other.

My life has been good for several years now, and I have often been at ease with the usual challenges of daily life. Since I have reached most of my goals and my recovery has also grown, my self-

esteem no longer depends so much on external things. The main ambitions of my past—sex and money—are stepping into the background. I like my inner independence. On the other hand, I am aimless. What a change! I have often asked myself in the last few years, “Where do I have to go?”

And I did indeed receive an answer. It seemed like a fleeting vision, as though an airplane were drawing a banner in the sky that read: “Help other people!”

This was really beyond my experience. I can be supportive, but only when I get something out of it. I have done a lot of service work, but mainly in order to strengthen my self-esteem and my sense of belonging.

It looks like our program does not result in an option to choose, but rather in a consequence that makes sense. I am surprised. My idea of a good life has always been that of a twenty-four-hour party, every day. Now it seems to me that it also contains a real option for reaching out to other people.

I, personally, have never been very quick at realizing new ideas. But my Higher Power, with his immeasurable humor, has been quick at finding something for me.

Because of my family’s background, I speak Hungarian. Our World Service Office had requests from Hungary, and I was involved in the communication. I am happy to participate in the development of NA in Hungary, and I decided to visit the second Hungarian NA convention. It was held near Pécs, in southern Hungary, in August.

Rarely have so many addicts allowed me to participate in their recovery. Since this NA community is much younger than my home region, they had many questions about personal recovery and the service structure. It is a remarkable experience to answer the same questions that I asked years ago. I came out of this Hungarian experience with two sponsees, after not sponsoring anyone for nearly ten years—but that is another story.

In love for the worldwide fellowship,
András Z, Munich, Germany

Fearless self-love: A concept

Sometimes, when I am very still, rejoicing in the silence that embraces me, I am aware of the stillness that is my sense of the Higher Power. I am fearless and engulfed in unconditional love. Pretty brave and self-assured thoughts, huh?

It is because of this sense that I am comfortable with loving myself today, and that is directly related to my personal journey through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

Recently I was sitting in a meeting and heard the speaker share that his personal experience of understanding unconditional love came about when he was asked to take a man out on a pass from a recovery facility. The two men had nothing in common: age, experience, education, drug choice, family, ethnicity, sexual preference, nothing except the disease of addiction. That was the common bond that allowed them to share the next eight hours together and relate on levels of spirituality neither had experienced before that God-given encounter.

As the two men parted, they embraced and expressed their gratitude for the time and emotions that were equally given with such freedom and peace, without judgment.

The speaker realized, in his heart, that he had freely given his love for himself—his sense of God loving him—without reservation or expectation, and as a result he felt empowered. For the first time in his recovery, he experienced the beginnings of self-love and fearlessness within himself. His spirit soared, and he was filled with the sense that real recovery was possible by simply giving it away.

So many times in recovery—and in life—I am filled with self-doubt, self-loathing, jealousy, envy, and anger. I tend to succumb to the character defects that were the mainstays of my life prior to recovery. I wrap myself in the tattered, soiled comforter of my old image of what I thought I really was. I rely on my self-described personality, the sum total of all my past experiences, to bring me to

the place and time of the moment.

It is in recovery and, with the passage of time, in the warm embrace of self-love that my Higher Power gives me as my new cloak that I come to understand what I *can* give away. I am assured that my experience, strength, and hope are tangible, and that they are transferable to others who may be longing for that kind of loving embrace.

I am grateful today for my understanding of self-love, and I gratefully give away what has so lovingly been given to me.

Bill C, California, USA

Liberty for all!

Step One, for me, is perhaps the most difficult of all the steps. Admitting that I am powerless over something is not easy to do, but the most important step toward recovery is this very first one.

Having admitted that I am powerless over my addiction has made me a better person. Not only did taking this step bring me into recovery, but it also helped me to understand the difference between powerlessness and weakness. Being powerless over my addiction does not equal being weak in any other area of my personal life. If anything, being conscious of the differences in these definitions has helped me become the person I am today.

Today I am no longer a slave of my addiction. I do not have to worry about what I may have done yesterday while I was loaded on drugs. I no longer have to look over my shoulder or worry about not having enough money. I took my First Step, and with it I started my road to recovery.

Today I have serenity, and I remember what I did yesterday. I am no longer locked up in my own personal prison.

My spiritual freedom—and my first real understanding of the NA program—came when I took my First Step. If powerlessness means to have what I have today, then I am okay with that!

Today I have my life back, and I thank NA and my Higher Power for that. Recovery is possible, and it will happen whenever I am able to admit the unmanageability of my life.

I believe the hand of NA will be there for those who seek recovery, just like it was there for me.

Fernando E, Wisconsin, USA

How important is it to make coffee?

At our last area service committee meeting someone came up with a question: What exactly do the groups need the ASC for? For that matter, why do they need any of the service structure?

Our group has our little meeting in the XYZ Area, and we are getting along just fine while “they” sit around at the ASC and debate about “our” expenses. Who cares if Tom writes the minutes and Dick counts the cash? Why not just stay home?

Well, good question. I think a lot of addicts in the meetings ask themselves this and come up with no answer. So they donate less—“it’s enough for our coffee, isn’t it?” is what they think of their smaller contributions.

What happens at the ASC or regional service committee meeting seems to many addicts to be a vague business that does not really have anything to do with “us” here in our groups.

At my home group someone makes the coffee and sets up the tables, and at the end of the meeting when the secretary asks for help cleaning up, there is an icy silence. After all, there are enough *other* people here; let *them* wash the dishes. Why should I?

I often feel that service positions—not only at the ASC, but in the groups, too—are being pushed around like unloved kids, and everyone is relieved when some poor member has been found to take the key or chair the meeting for another year.

The ASC, RSC, even NA World Services are seen as “them up there.” In the best case, *they* leave us alone; in the

worst case, *they* keep wanting money to squander on who-knows-what. Why should I care if addicts in China have a Basic Text?

What a pity it has become like this. After I had been going to NA meetings for a little while I was “entrusted,” not “burdened,” with a key. I “had the opportunity” to go to the ASC, instead of “sacrificing yet another weekend.” When I washed the dishes I felt I belonged just a little more, and it was a great experience to be at a business meeting and see that my vote counted for something.

After the ASC meetings, I often heard people share about gratitude and being able to give back something to the fellowship by doing service. I was told to “stick with the winners,” and that the winners were those addicts who worked the steps and were of service to the fellowship. That was the group to which I wanted to belong!

I learned all of this through the example of those members who shared their enthusiasm with me, but who also did their service work with humility and gratitude, who calmly answered the question “Who will wash the dishes?” by saying, “I’d like to”—even if they said this every single week—and then serenely washing the dishes.

Right from the beginning I did a lot of service in NA. Only after a while did I burden myself with too many service positions instead of letting others do their share. Somewhere along the road I lost my gratitude. I started nagging and complaining and feeling exploited. I measured others with my perfectionism, criticizing and judging them.

When the question “Who will wash the dishes?” came up after the meeting, I grimly stayed silent. After all, I told myself, “I have washed those dishes for at least five years. I’m fed up; now it’s someone else’s turn. And didn’t I do all that service on the ASC and RSC? And I didn’t get nearly enough appreciation for it.” Goodbye, humility and gratitude!

Our last ASC meeting really got me thinking. This was not the first time we heard the question about what good our service structure was and experienced the lack of support for it through dwindling donations. I know I can tell the people in the meetings all those won-

derful things about what “they” do in the worldwide service structure, but the reality is that it is all just words.

I have been going to NA meetings for eight years. I’ve done all that “important” service work. But when the newcomer sees someone like me grimly keeping quiet when the question “Who will help?” comes up—does that look like something worth supporting?

So how can I really live the principles of humility and gratitude? By starting to become an example like the ones I had, and by serenely helping to wash the dishes!

I still—or rather, again—enthusiastically do service in NA. In fact, it is like the cherry on the cake in my recovery! I keep being deeply moved that I am able to participate in such a wonderful thing as this worldwide fellowship of NA and that I can contribute to it by doing my part in service work.

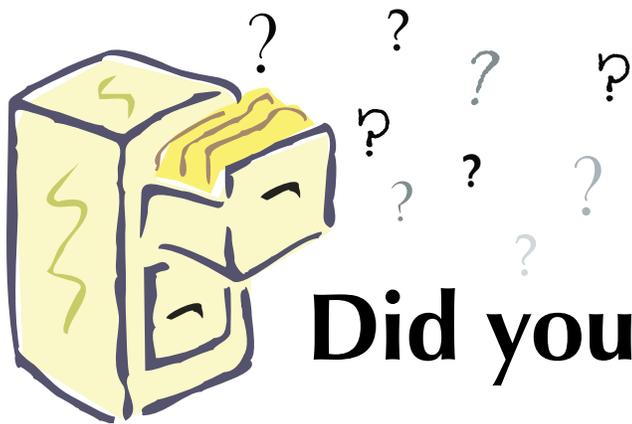
So back to the question in the beginning: No, it is absolutely *not* important if Tom writes the minutes, Dick counts the cash, or Harry sits there. But I firmly believe that every tiny contribution makes a difference—never mind where or when we do it.

Actually, making the coffee in the meeting is a lot more important than meaningfully sitting in some service body. I am convinced that none of our meetings here in Germany would exist had not one addict in some small town in America many years ago been serenely making coffee and washing dishes for ages, and by so doing inspired another addict to do service, who then inspired another addict, who then inspired another, and so on.

Today we have over 220 meetings in the German-Speaking Region. NA is being born in the remotest parts of the world, literature is being translated into many languages, workshops and conventions are being organized, the NA message is being brought into institutions and jails, enthusiasm and recovery are being shared.

Thanks to all those who make the coffee in the meetings!

Sigrid B, Karlsruhe, Germany



Did you know?

The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has come a long way since our early beginnings in 1953. We have grown from that first meeting held in Sun Valley, California, USA, to over 31,700 weekly meetings held in over 113 countries worldwide. Our history is rich with diversity, and we want to share the facts of that history with you, the little-known, as well as the well-known. If you have an interesting and historic fact, send it to us at naway@na.org or NAWS, Attn: *The NA Way Magazine*, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

Did you know... Jimmy K would have been clean for fifty-three years at NA's Fiftieth Anniversary celebration in San Diego, California, USA, in July 2003.

Did you know... NA in Trinidad celebrated nineteen years in August 2003.

Did you know... Hungary had its third NA convention in September. There are currently eight NA groups in Hungary, and NA members here can now get keytags in their native language.

Did you know... NA's first piece of literature, the Little Brown Booklet, was published in 1954.

Did you know... The epigraph that introduces the preface of our Basic Text, page xi ("*The full fruit of a labor of love lives in the harvest, and that always comes in its right season ...*"), was sent via telegram to the (then) World Service Conference Literature Committee meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, USA, by Jimmy Kinnon. The date was 7 February 1981. These meetings, called World Literature Conferences, were held specifically to work on creating our Basic Text of recovery.

Did you know... The Fellowship Services Team at the World Service Office in Chatsworth, California, USA, receives eighty to 110 letters a week from incarcerated addicts.

Did you know... In 1993 the first Latin American Conference (now known as the Latin American Zonal Forum) was held in Lima, Peru, with representatives from five regions in attendance. The LAZF held in San Jose, Costa Rica, in 2001 had representatives from nineteen NA communities.

Did you know... More NA literature has been translated into Spanish than any other language.

Did you know... The first Area Service Committee—the San Fernando Valley ASC—was created on the north side of the city of Los Angeles, California, USA, in 1973.

Did you know... NA recovery chips and medallions were first produced in 1982.

2004 Conference Agenda Report

The English-language version of the *Conference Agenda Report* was published on 24 November 2003, and the translated versions (French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish) will be available on 23 December 2003. Each copy costs \$9.00, *including* shipping and handling charges. Sales tax will be added if ordered in California. **The CAR's front section and its Addenda E & F are published on our website at www.na.org.** Please note the download version does not include the sponsorship draft material found in Addenda A-D.



Diary of an anniversary

On 17 August 2003, NA Netherlands had its fifth Appreciation Day. It was a day of gratitude in a memorable year. Thankfully the small but warm Dutch NA community, together with visitors from Germany, Belgium, and England, celebrated the fact that fifteen years ago, in August 1988, some American fellows who lived in Amsterdam decided to have the very first NA meeting in the Netherlands.

And there was even more to be grateful for. After ten years of hard work, the first edition of the approved Dutch version of the Basic Text was finally published. One more NA community has come of age, so to speak.

The following is a diary by an NA member from Amsterdam. It represents personal experiences, as well as thoughts and feelings about a memorable event.

Before 17 August 2003:

For weeks there had been talk about celebrating this year's Appreciation Day. Shall we have one or not? And who is willing to organize it?

Luckily, a few members stood up, some with just about a year clean time. "Our fellowship needs to have a fun-day!" was their slogan. So, on the first Saturday of June, the suggestion for a day of gratitude was put forth at our area meeting.

Happy to see so much enthusiasm, the area elected someone to organize a sub-committee. It was decided to have this Fifth Appreciation Day in a recreational park located in a suburban area of the city of Amsterdam with a pond nearby. Appreciation Day 2003—or "AD," as it was soon to be called—was set for 17 August, a day to which we were all looking forward.

For the following two months the committee met almost weekly. Even smaller sub-committees were formed, taking responsibility for food and beverage, sports, literature and meetings, and music. One of the committee members offered to design a flyer. Telephone calls were made; prices of sports equipment were sought and compared. Megastores were paid a visit in order to get the best deals. A link from the fellowship's website to the event's digital flyer was made, emails were sent, and even more of them were received.

It was also agreed that special attention should be paid to the publication of the first approved Dutch version of the Basic Text. A subcommittee member who had experienced the excitement of a big NA convention abroad thought it a good idea to have a clean-time countdown and to have copies handed over to newcomers.

There were also little worries: How many people to expect? Perhaps fifty from our own fellowship's seventy members and maybe ten to fifteen from elsewhere? How much food and soft drinks to be purchased, and how much money to be sought from the area service committee? What if this fantastic weather changes and it starts raining?

The closer "AD" got, the more nervous some of the committee members became. But their anxiety never got in the way when it came down to working closely and compassionately together.

The excitement with which the subcommittee went about its organizing business was infectious. Members who were asked to chair the meetings, read the cards, and help at lunchtime or with the barbecue gladly agreed. At our recovery meetings, announcements were made about the committee's work and flyers were distributed. Everyone felt that this year's Appreciation Day would be a very special day.

Sunday, 17 August 2003:

It was a somewhat overcast and grayish day. At least it was not as sunny and hot as the previous weeks had been. The weather forecast even predicted some showers in the late afternoon. But we did not worry. Excited by the event that was about to happen, we packed all our stuff at 8:00 am. After having breakfast at a subcommittee member's house, we set out to the venue.

There was hardly anyone in the park except for the odd jogger. We quickly unloaded the little van, arranged the

the reassuring and welcoming attitude of a former area chairperson, everybody felt relieved and somewhat less insecure and nervous.

We all sat down in the grass or on little stools, formed a circle, and had a moment of silence for the still-suffering addict. Appreciation Day 2003 started with a meeting in which everybody present expressed their gratitude. Slowly more members came in, looked at the smiling faces, and sat down, helping our circle expand. Our youngest member closed this first meeting by reading the "Just for Today" card while walking around the circle. What a wonderful way to start the day, and what a great way to feel the warmth of the NA community.

Lunch gave everyone the opportunity to slowly get to know each other. Most visitors from abroad felt the need to share the fantastic experience of being in Amsterdam without having to use drugs. "How do you do it?" was a question often asked!

In the afternoon, speakers from Belgium and Amsterdam shared their sto-

had been called to stand up for a moment. We all looked at each other in anticipation of a special moment.

Starting with a member who had twenty-eight grateful years of clean time, the countdown got exciting when fellows with less than thirty days were called to raise their hands and get up. And there was more to come.

Over a period of ten years, many members had worked on the Dutch translation of the Basic Text. Earlier this year the approved Dutch version was finally published. All members who contributed to this major effort were thanked, and those present were even cheered. Lastly, those with less than two weeks in the fellowship were asked to come forward to receive a copy of *Narcotics Anonymous/Anonieme Verslaafden*.

Six new members from the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany stood up. When the ceremony was closed with the Serenity Prayer, after everyone was told to first hug someone he or she had not hugged before, the circle was tighter than it had ever been before.

"AD" was to end with games (volleyball, soccer, badminton, swimming), a fantastic barbecue—with even our vegetarian members able to participate—and a closing meeting. For the last time that day we expressed our gratitude and shared our experience and hope. Just when we decided it was time to pack our stuff and leave the park after having cleaned up the meeting ground, it started to rain, as if we were shown that Appreciation Day 2003 had really come to an end. What a memorable day!

After 17 August 2003:

Once more the members of the organizing subcommittee came together, but this time it was to evaluate "AD." We agreed that all the hard work had paid off. The best news came from our treasurer: Thanks to advance donations, Seventh Tradition contributions onsite, and the sale of T-shirts, Appreciation Day 2003 had cost our NA community a mere 61 euros, about the cost of six copies of the Basic Text. What a way to spread the message!

Bani da L, Amsterdam, Netherlands

"The Serenity Prayer was overwhelming, for the words were said not only in English but also in Dutch, German, and French."

tables, took out the soft drinks, and started to unpack the food.

"AD" was supposed to begin at 11:00 am. Gradually, NA members started to come, but surprisingly, they seemed to have come from everywhere except the Netherlands. Just for a moment we were afraid that, with an NA community of about seventy members, there would be more members from abroad than from our own country.

Just before the first meeting was about to start, more members from the Dutch NA community arrived. Thanks to

ries with about one hundred fellow addicts. A feeling of togetherness was tangible. We all stood up and, again, formed a circle. The Serenity Prayer was overwhelming, for the words were said not only in English but also in Dutch, German, and French.

Finally the clean-time countdown was about to begin. This was a moment to which many of us had been looking forward for weeks. Dressed in white, holding the Basic Text in his right hand, one of our members announced the countdown. He asked those whose clean time



Clarity statements

I received *The NA Way Magazine* in the mail today (written 16 September 2001). As I browsed through it, I stopped to read the response from H&I Slim. In it was a reference to "clarity statements" used in Narcotics Anonymous meetings and H&I panel presentations. I would like to express my opinion as to why I believe these statements are inappropriate and contradict the spiritual principles in many of our traditions

Let me begin by saying I feel our First Tradition calls on each individual member to overlook the differences that may divide us, such as language, and focus on our common identity as unified members of a greater whole. Tradition One does *not* justify what one could define as self-righteous attempts to shoehorn members into certain beliefs about the propriety or impropriety of particular language. Our common welfare hinges not so much on our ability to impose uniformity as on every individual member's willingness to surrender any defect standing in the way of unconditional acceptance

These "clarity statements" are often adopted in the name of group conscience, but the essay on Tradition Two in our Basic Text tells us that "true spiritual principles are never in conflict; they complement each other. The spiritual conscience of a group will never contradict any of our traditions." The will of our ultimate authority ought to be expressed through this conscience—not the will of a few more popular individuals who may attempt to disguise political motives as spiritual ones.

The Basic Text tells us that our reaction to drugs is what makes us addicts, not what we used. The Third Tradition tells us that our desire to stop using is what makes us members, not what we say. It is not our job to pressure other members to talk or act "correctly." We teach by example, welcoming others as they comfortably come to their own understanding of recovery, in God's time.

Tradition Four speaks of group autonomy. With that autonomy comes a great measure of freedom, but this freedom does not come at the expense of principles embodied in other traditions. As stated in our Basic Text, when a contradiction exists between group autonomy and another tradition, "we have slipped away from our principles."

Our message, as spoken of in our Fifth Tradition, ought to express love and focus our collective energy through the spirit of encouragement, patience, tolerance, and acceptance of all members at any phase in their development. To criticize, correct, reject, categorize, or disapprove of other members' language is to carry a message of fear. If ever our message might be "blurred," it would be as a result of the latter.

Many clarity statements borrow the name of Narcotics Anonymous and carry with them an implied blanket endorsement. To me, having served on a literature committee in NA and experienced some of the laborious efforts put into every piece of approved literature in our fellowship, these statements are very disturbing. These statements have not gone through this process of approval in NA. Consequently, groups and committees displaying, printing, and reading these statements are themselves contradicting our Sixth Tradition through the endorsement of an opinion, not the principles of NA.

What is the purpose of such clarity statements? To edit the language used by our members in communicating their experience, strength, and hope? Or could it be a self-righteous, misguided "control" issue, an attempt to organize NA, as such? Could this have the effect of creating a top-down bureaucracy dictating to our members,

making our members responsible for serving the will of their service committees rather than the other way around?

Remember our Ninth Tradition: "NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

So, then, what is NA's opinion of the "sober alcoholic" member? Answer: NA has no opinion. NA does not endorse language or concepts of addiction tied to specific drugs—but neither does NA oppose them. That is the simplicity of Tradition Ten. NA stands neutral on these issues, neither endorsing *nor* opposing. Therefore, groups and committees using statements opposing causes—language, in particular—are also in opposition to Tradition Ten.

We hear it said, over and over, that in recovery "we teach by example." I have found that when an ideal or concept is repeated throughout a lesson, it ought to be given special consideration. The concept of "teaching by example" allows our fellowship to practice creative freedom while at the same time removing any threat of self-righteousness. This spiritual concept, taught in our Eleventh Tradition, is neither practiced nor encouraged through the implementation of clarity statements. The example of each member's recovery and our success as a fellowship speaks for itself. This success is sufficient attraction to Narcotics Anonymous, making it unnecessary for us to promote any part of our program.

And finally, language specificity could never be an issue when humility is practiced through the spirit of anonymity in our Twelfth Tradition. When the principle of anonymity is squarely in place, members cannot be earmarked as "adjective addicts"; they can only be seen as simple, anonymous parts of a greater whole—they ought never be maliciously separated or distinguished from other recovering addicts. The principles of recovery that unite us ought always be paramount over the forces of personality that may divide us.

"Truly, anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions. Without it, the unity upon

which personal recovery depends would dissolve in a chaos of conflicting personalities. With it, our groups are given a body of guiding principle, our Twelve Traditions, helping them join the personal strengths of their members in a fellowship that supports and nurtures the recovery of us all." (It Works: How and Why, page 215)

Andy K, California, USA

Picture this

NA communities are invited to send photographs of their meeting places. We especially welcome photos that include meeting formats, recovery literature, posters, dirty coffee cups, and anything else that makes the meeting place look "lived in." Sorry, we cannot use photos that identify NA members. Please tell us about your meeting, its name, the location and city, how long it has been in existence, and what your format consists of (speaker, participation, etc.).

The Vale La Pena Group (Worthwhile Group) meets twice a day at 12:30 pm and 6:00 pm. The 12:30 pm meeting draws about twenty active home group members, and the 6:00 pm meeting brings fifteen active members. Both meetings are open.

Other fellowships also use this big room. We have a coffee area and two storage areas. Some of the members have donated old furniture. In one of the hallways we have an old sofa for naps and Thirteenth Steps. We are joking, of course! We also have a grill to use for barbecues.

The noon meeting is having a hard time and is not well disciplined. We have done group Fourth Steps on this matter, but we are still having some difficulty maintaining order. We continue to be a work-in-progress.

Renard S, Guatemala City, Guatemala



Primary Purpose

"There are many ways of doing things in Narcotics Anonymous. And just as all of us have our own individual personalities, so will your group develop its own identity, its own way of doing things, and its own special knack for carrying the NA message. That's the way it should be. In NA we encourage unity, not uniformity."

The Group Booklet, pg. 1

This is a column for you, about you, and by you. We invite you to share any challenges your group may have faced, how your group reached a solution, and/or its "special knack" that keeps you coming back!

An outside issue?

Lately there has been a lot of talk about violence in NA—members pulling out guns, attacking other members, and just being rude in our meetings. When I ask about it, I am told that it is an outside issue and does not really concern this area. I thought this was the Fellowship of NA, not the Fellowship of the Area or of one person. Violence affects the NA Fellowship as a whole. Service committees help our groups and our members, to paraphrase our Basic Text. Violence affects not only our members but also our groups and the facilities we use for our meetings.

Unfortunately, society does not look at the individual addict's behavior; it judges us all for what any one of us does. I have been of service on the Outreach Committee for nine years. I have been of assistance in starting meetings in the Detroit Area, and one thing stands out: the concern of the facilities in which we hold our meetings. The facilities not only hear about the violence, they also see it—and believe me, these facilities *do* judge.

Our literature tells us that if we do not change our old way of thinking, we will go back to using. There was a time when I would see violence in the street, and I would think that it did not concern me, until a family member of a friend got hurt. I was in my own world then and not a part of anything; today, that is no longer the case. Today I have a responsibility not only to my family and friends, but also to this fellowship, which gave me a life. This new life is about change, and I can no longer afford to look the other way. Violence has no named target; it puts everyone in jeopardy.

The disease of addiction affects every area of my life, including my behavior and my attitude. It plays a big part in how other people (society as a whole) view this fellowship. Our Basic Text reminds us that, while living in our active addiction, "we forgot how to express ourselves and how to show concern for others." This is displayed sometimes in our meetings and in our interactions with other people.

When I acted out in a meeting once, I was told by a member that while they could not put me out of the fellowship, they could put me out of the facility. I find it strange that there are cell phone and pager interruptions during our meetings while members are sharing, yet when someone pulls a gun or attacks a member no one can call 911. "Oh, yeah, that's right, it's an outside issue."

It is further stated in our Basic Text that "our survival is directly related to the survival of the group and the fellowship. To maintain unity within Narcotics Anonymous, it is imperative that the group remains stable, or the entire fellowship perishes and the individual dies."

There is no stability when violence runs rampant in our groups. It affects the whole NA Fellowship. If we continue to justify the violence that is occurring in our fellowship, we will die.

What is our message? "That an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live." What about not getting hurt or even possibly dying in our meetings?

We protect what we have with vigilance; we must stay alert to what is going on around us in our meetings and in our fellowship.

Tim S, Michigan, USA



me to the right place, with the right people, in a frame of mind that is conducive to gaining experience or knowledge. It is then up to me to make the choice to wisely apply that knowledge or not. Experience can sometimes bring knowledge and wisdom. But remember how many addicts experience the consequences of drug use every day, yet fail to derive any wisdom or knowledge from that experience.

Continually asking for serenity, courage, and wisdom keeps these three vitally important concepts in the forefront of my thoughts on a daily basis. I strive to exhibit them in my life, one day at a time. Serenity, courage, and wisdom are indispensable tools when working the Twelve Steps. Since I have repeatedly worked the steps throughout my recovery, it seems appropriate to repeatedly ask my Higher Power for these dynamic tools of recovery.

Each addict has the freedom to choose to use or to not use. Serenity, courage, and wisdom help me make the right choice. By keeping the Serenity Prayer as part of the NA program, we have the freedom to choose to use it or to not use it.

Kevin K., Pennsylvania, USA

Dear NA Way,

This letter is in response to the article titled "Whose Responsibility?" (April 2003—Volume 20, Number 2). There were many times when I brought my daughter to meetings over the past years. I did this simply because I needed to attend a meeting and would not have been able to if I could not bring her. I have no family to baby-sit, and I do not have the extra money to pay a sitter. Many times my friends watch her so I can go to a meeting alone. However, sometimes there is no one available.

Sometimes I just need to get to a meeting so I will not act out and raise my hand to my child. I need a meeting so I will not raise my voice or act selfishly. I need a meeting so I will not use again and maybe die.

No matter how much clean time I have, I know using again is always possible if I do not attend meetings regularly. How lucky I am that people in my

area have been supportive and understanding, greeting my daughter warmly and graciously distracting her when I need to share.

Now I am married to another recovering addict, and we have a gorgeous new baby. Since I have to work and do not want to leave this nursling when I do not have to, my newborn son comes to meetings with me. Despite my full life and responsibilities, I have to keep my recovery a priority. My son comes to meetings in my arms or in his infant seat—sleeping, nursing, or maybe crying. In the groups I attend the members have been nothing but loving and caring.

Where would I be without NA?

Anonymous

WCNA-30 facts and figures

- ☛ 7 feet 4 inches tall by 4 feet diameter equals the size of the "official" NA-50 birthday cake.
- ☛ 12 members of the San Diego-Imperial Region served on the Support Committee.
- ☛ 131 telephone link-ups from 28 countries participated in Unity Day.
- ☛ WCNA-30 used 247 shuttle buses totaling 4,199 operating hours to move attendees.
- ☛ 1,250 newcomers were given convention registrations.
- ☛ 2,352 volunteer shifts were filled by members being of service during the convention.
- ☛ 4,553 members laughed loudly at two comedy shows.
- ☛ 5,727 members sang the blues with BB King and Kenny Wayne Shepherd.
- ☛ More than 8,000 people attended the Kickoff Food and Music Festival.
- ☛ 11,986 speaker tapes were purchased.
- ☛ 12,394 room nights were filled in 22 hotels.
- ☛ 13,212 members paid for convention registration kits.
- ☛ 13,420 soft pretzels were devoured.
- ☛ 18,400 members attended the Saturday Unity Day meeting and anniversary celebration.
- ☛ 19,214 special-event tickets were sold.
- ☛ 22,000 members attended the convention.
- ☛ 24,105 Mrs. Fields cookies were munched.
- ☛ 38,000 bath towels were soiled.
- ☛ 44,200 chairs were set up, including 20,400 seats for main meetings.
- ☛ 52,565 cups of coffee were savored.
- ☛ 56,840 pieces of merchandise were sold.



CALENDAR

We encourage you to publicize your event by having it published on our website and in *The NA Way Magazine*. You can inform the WSO about your event by fax, phone, or regular post, or through our website. We encourage using the website because you can check to see if we already have a listing on your convention and, if not, you can enter your own convention information. It is then reviewed, formatted, and added to the online convention calendar on our website in approximately four days. Just go to www.na.org, click on "NA Events," and follow the instructions.

Convention announcements entered through the website and those received by other means are also given to *The NA Way*. *The NA Way* is published four times a year in January, April, July, and October. Each issue goes into production long before its distribution date, so we need a minimum of three months' notice to ensure your event will be published in the magazine—that's three months before our publication date. For instance, if you want your event published in the October issue, we need to know by 1 July.

Bermuda

Hamilton: 26-28 Mar; Serenity in Paradise IV; Our Primary Purpose; Fairmont Hamilton Princess, Hamilton; hotel rsvns: 800.441.1414; event info: 441.295.5300; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 January; write: Bermuda Islands Area, Box DV 690, Devonshire, Bermuda; www.bermudana.org

Canada

Ontario: 21-23 May; Ontario Regional Convention XVII; Waterloo Inn and Conference Center, Waterloo; hotel rsvns: 519.884.0220; event info: 800.361.4708; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 January; write: ORCNA XVII Registration, Box 40022, Waterloo Square PO, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2J 4V1; www.orcna.org/orcna

Quebec: 5-7 Mar; Eighth Annual Youth Convention; Greater Than Ourselves; Days Inn Hotel, Montreal; hotel rsvns: 514.332.2720; event info: 514.723.4404; speaker tape info: 450.444.3436; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 January

India

Bangalore: 17-19 Feb; NA World Services Worldwide Workshop; Making the Connection; Shakthi Hill Resorts, Bangalore; event info: +984.514.6201, +984.415.8323, +984.518.1485; write: NA World Services, 19737 Nordhoff Pl, Chatsworth, CA 91311; www.na.org

Bombay: 15-17 Jan; BACNA XI; Free at Last; Hotel Riviera Matheran, Matheran; event info: +00.98204.09239, +00.98922.27335, +91.22.3275.2535; write: Bombay Area, Box 1953, GPO Mumbai, Maharashtra, India 400 001; www.nabombay.org

Karnataka: 20-22 Feb; India Regional Convention IV; Isolation to Connection; Best Club, Bangalore; www.ircna4.org

Indonesia

Java: 23-25 Jan; Hand in Hand; Together We Can; Taman Mini, Jakarta; www.na-bali.org/english/events/eng_jak_conv.htm

Italy

Rimini: 30 Mar-2 Apr; Italian Convention XXI; Hotel Continental E Dei Congressi, Rimini; hotel rsvns: +39.0541.391300; www.na-italia.it

Mexico

Baja California Norte: 26-28 Mar; CABCNA I; Hotel Colonial, Mexicali; hotel rsvns: 800.43.7238; Spanish: +52.68.61.02.4987; English: 760.554.2788; from Mexico: +01.686.567.9516; speaker tape submission deadline: 5 January; write: CABCNA I, 120-A Rockwood Ave, PMB 44758, Calexico, CA 92231; CABCNA I, Ave Madero #491, Zona Centro, Apdo Postal #8, Mexicali BC, Mexico

Uruguay

Montevideo: 22-25 Jan; Convención Latinoamericana VI; Creciendo en Unidad y Foro Zonal Latino Americano; NH Columbia Hotel, Montevideo; event info: +59.899.644433, +59.82.6221156

United States

Alabama: 16-18 Jan; Free at Last VII; Guesthouse Hotel and Suite Convention Center, Montgomery; hotel rsvns: 334.264.2231; write: Central Alabama, Box 230572, Montgomery, AL 36123-0572; www.alnwfllrscna.org

2) 6-8 Feb; Out of the Darkness, Into the Light VIII; Holiday Inn, Decatur; hotel rsvns: 256.350.3501; event registration: 256.858.2076; write: North Alabama Area, Box 18231, Huntsville, AL 35804

Arkansas: 27-29 Feb; Texarkana Area Convention; Four Points Sheraton, Texarkana; hotel rsvns: 903.792.3222; event info: 903.791.1551, 870.773.2287, 870.772.1227; write: Texarkana Area, Box 6321, Texarkana, TX 75501

California: 16-18 Jan; Tri Area Convention IV; Red Lion Hotel, Eureka; write: Sierra Foothills, Shasta, 916 No. and River Cities; Hosted this year by Humboldt del Norte.

2) 20-22 Feb; Central California Regional Convention XII; Living in the Moment; Holiday Inn Select, Bakersfield; hotel rsvns: 661.323.1900; event info: 805.382.1922, 661.250.2164, 805.934.4228; write: Central California Region, Box 2170, Santa Maria, CA 93457-2170; www.ccrna.org

3) 8-11 Apr; NCCNA XXVI; Carrying the Message; Westin Hotel, Santa Clara; hotel rsvns: 408.986.0700; event registration: 707.616.4238; event info: 650.321.7461

Connecticut: 2-4 Jan; CTCNA XIX; Alone I Can't, Together We Can; Mystic Marriott Hotel, Groton; hotel rsvns: 860.446.2600; event info: 860.355.3378; event registration: 203.676.8170; speaker tape info: 860.635.9444; write: Connecticut Region, Box 112, New Haven, CT 06513; www.ctna.org

Delaware: 12-14 Mar; SWACNA VI; Treasures of Life; Wyndham Hotel, Wilmington; hotel rsvns: 800.996.3426; event registration: 302.999.7602; event info: 302.765.3779, 302.345.8445; write: Small Wonder Area, SWACNA VI, 219 W 27th St, Wilmington, DE 19802

Florida: 22-25 Jan; Annual Spiritual Retreat; One Message, One Spirit; 15 Years of Spiritual Awakenings; Gold Coast Christian Camp, Palm Beach; event info: 561.746.6096; write: Palm Coast Area, Box 20984, West Palm Beach, FL 33216-0984; www.palmcoastna.com; email: retreat@palmcoastna.com

Georgia: 9-11 Jan; Peace in Recovery XVI; Augusta; event info: 706.364.3464

2) 19-22 Feb; GRCNA XXIII; A Bridge Back to Life; Renaissance Concourse Hotel, Atlanta; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 770.389.0533, 404.349.6993, 706.561.1709; write: GRCNA-23, Box 2012, Jonesboro, GA 30236; www.grcna.org

Hawaii: 23-25 Jan; Third Annual NA Wahine Big Island Women's Retreat; Makapala Retreat Center, Kapa'au; hotel rsvns: 808.967.8518; event registration: 808.895.2167; write: Hawaii Region, Box 90365, Honolulu, HI 96835; www.na-hawaii.org/HRSC/convention.htm

2) 12-14 Mar; Twentieth Annual Oahu Gathering of NA; Boy Scout Camp, Mokuleia, Waialua, Oahu; event info: 808.381.5249; event registration: 808.291.3438; speaker tape info: 808.371.5334; write: Oahu Gathering Committee, 91-1179 Puamaeole St, #24E, Ewa Beach, HI 96706; www.na-hawaii.org/HRSC/convention.htm#OAHU

Idaho: 2-4 Apr; Southern Idaho Regional Convention XV; Point of Freedom; Owyhee Plaza Hotel, Boise; hotel rsvns: 800.233.4611; event info: 208.442.2220; write: Southern Idaho Region, Box 96, Caldwell, ID 83605; www.sirna.org

Illinois: 2-4 Apr; Our Message Is Hope, The Promise Is Freedom; Ramada Inn, South Beloit; hotel rsvns: 815-389-3481; write: Rock River Area, 8717 Wakefield Dr, Machesney Park, IL 61115

Indiana: 27-29 Feb; ISNAC XI; Following in the Footsteps of Our Predecessors; Adams Mark Hotel, Indianapolis; hotel rsvns: 317.248.2481; event info: 317.716.6124, 317.246.1299, 317.638.0580; write: Indiana Region Convention Committee, Box 501481, Indianapolis, IN 46250-1481; www.isnac.com

Kansas: 9-11 Apr; Mid-America Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita; hotel rsvns: 800.243.2546; event registration: 785.227.4241; speaker tape info: 316.269.3275; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 January; write: MARCNA, Box 422, Lindsborg, KS 67456; www.marscna.net

Louisiana: 28-30 May; LRCNA XXII; Hampton Inn/Louisiana Convention Center, Alexandria; hotel rsvns: 318.487.8500; event registration: 318.449.1589; speaker tape info: 318.448.3310; speaker tape submission deadline: 15 February; write: LRCNA XXII, Box 7045, Alexandria, LA 71306-0045; email: lrcnaxxii@yahoo.com

Maryland: 16-18 Apr; Chesapeake and Potomac Regional Convention XVIII; Ocean City Convention Center, Ocean City; write: Chesapeake and Potomac Region, Box 1704, La Plata, MD 20640; email: host@cprcna.org

Massachusetts: 2-4 Jan; Weathering the Storm II; The Journey Continues; Boston Marriott Copley Place, Boston; hotel rsvns: 800.228.9290; event info: 508.653.2342; speaker tape info: 617.288.3184; event registration: 617.822.0693; write: BACNA IX, 398 Columbus Ave, Ste 278, Boston, MA 02116

Michigan: 8-11 Apr; Detroit Areas Convention; Marriott Hotel at the Renaissance, Detroit; hotel rsvns: 313.568.8000; event registration: 313.526.8253; speaker tape info: 313.283.3209; event info: 313.865.5203; write: Detroit Areas of NA, Box 32603, Detroit, MI 48232; <http://michigan-na.org/dacna>

Minnesota: 30 Mar-2 Apr; MNNAC XI; Simplicity Is the Key; Holiday Inn, St. Cloud; hotel rsvns: 800.HOLIDAY; event info: 320.230.2188; speaker tape submission deadline: 30 Jan; write: MNNAC XI Convention, Box 728, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379-0728

Missouri: 6-8 Feb; Cabin Fever Prevention Convention; Lodge of the Four Seasons, Lake Ozark; hotel rsvns: 800.THE.LAKE; event info: 573.489.1694; event registration: 573.445.2044; speaker tape info: 573.874.0150; write: Mid-Missouri Area, Box 413, Columbia, MO 65205; email: midmissourina@midmissourina.org

New Jersey: 27-29 Feb; Pearl of Recovery XIV; Wildwood Convention Center, Wildwood; event info: 609.898.2135

2) 26-28 Mar; Road to Recovery VIII; Diversity is our Strength; Ramada Inn, Hightstown; hotel rsvns: 609.448.7000; event info: 609.394.7237, 609.977.6872; event registration: 609.392.2521; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 January; write: Capital Area Convention, Box 2464, Trenton, NJ 08607; www.nanj.org

New York: 16-18 Jan; NACNA I; A Gift Called Life; Hilton Huntington, Melville; hotel rsvns: 800.HILTONS; speaker tape info: 516.369.0062; event registration: 516.322.1061; event info: 516.328.1838; write: Nassau Area, Box 531, Hicksville, NY 11801

2) 12-14 Mar; RACNA X; Recovery Is Possible; Crowne Plaza Rochester, Rochester; hotel rsvns: 800.227.6963; event info: 585.436.2865, 585.454.6566, 585.224.0688; write: Rochester Area, Box 30485, Rochester, NY 14604; email: abarron@frontiernet.net

3) 28-30 May; Heart of New York Area Convention I; Unity from the Heart; Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel, Syracuse; hotel rsvns: 800.395.2105; event registration: 315.876.2628; event info: 315.469.4740, 315.424.0157; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 March; write: HONYNA, Box 1075, Syracuse, NY 13201-1075

4) 28-31 May; Freedom XVII; Keep It Simple; New York Hilton & Towers, New York; hotel rsvns: 800.445.8667; event registration: 212.242.8140; event info: 212.242.8140; speaker tape info: 212.242.8140; speaker tape submission deadline: 28 February; write: Greater New York Region, 154 Christopher St, Ste 1A, New York, NY 10014; www.newyorkna.org/freedom/index.html

North Carolina: 27-29 Feb; Freedom by the Sea III; Seatrial Resort, Golf and Conference Center, Sunset Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.624.6601; event info: 910.763.1343; speaker tape info: 910.254.0988; event registration: 910.675.1646; write: Freedom by the Sea, Box 561, Wilmington, NC 28401; email: egayfield@msn.com, neetg@bellsouth.com

2) 16-18 Apr; Bound for Freedom XIX; Adams Mark Hotel, Charlotte; hotel rsvns: 800.444.2326; speaker tape info: 704.358.4293; event registration: 704.587.7907; event info: 704.597.9413; write: Bound for Freedom XIX, Box 33306, Charlotte, NC 28202

Ohio: 2-4 Jan; COACNA XV; Point of Freedom; We Believe in Miracles; Hyatt on Capital Square, Columbus; hotel rsvns: 800.233.1234; event info: 614.443.5184, 614.237.8360, 614.783.1549; write: COACNA XV, Box 32351, Columbus, OH 43232-0351

2) 5-7 Mar; Cleveland Area Convention; Holiday Inn Westlake, Cleveland; hotel rsvns: 800.762.7416; event info: 216.752.0930; event registration: 216.231.5494; speaker tape info: 216.441.3783; write: Cleveland Area Convention, Box 22448, Beachwood, OH 44122

Oklahoma: 23-25 Apr; Oklahoma Regional Convention XVIII; Holiday Inn, Stillwater; hotel rsvns: 405.372.0800; event registration: 918.289.3897; speaker tape submission deadline: 31 January; write: Oklahoma Region, 129 Lake Country, Mannford, OK 74044; www.okna.org

Pennsylvania: 9-11 Apr; Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention XIX; Radisson Hotel Valley Forge, King of Prussia; hotel rsvns: 888.267.1500; event info: 215.483.5154; www.gprso.org

South Carolina: 23-25 Jan; USCANA XXIV; Hilton on Haywood, Greenville; hotel rsvns: 864.232.4747; event registration: 864.275.9088; speaker tape info: 864.467.9924; event info: 864.675.0330

2) 13-15 Feb; Recovery at Work (RAW) III; Hilton Head Island Beach & Tennis Resort, Hilton Head Island; hotel rsvns: 800.475.2631; event registration: 803.240.5083; speaker tape info: 803.361.1008; write: Greater Columbia Area, Box 3957, Columbia, SC 29230

Texas: 13-15 Feb; TBRCNA V; Airport Hilton, San Antonio; hotel rsvns: 210.340.6060; event registration: 210.559.2732; write: Tejas Bluebonnet, 6425 South IH 35, Ste 105, Austin, TX 78744; www.tejasna.org/convention.html

2) 8-11 Apr; Nineteenth Annual Lone Star Regional Convention; Living the Dream; The Westin Park Central, Dallas; hotel rsvns: 972.385.3000; event info: 800.747.8972; write: Lone Star Region, 1510 Randolph, Ste 205, Carrollton, TX 75006; www.lsrna.com

Virginia: 9-11 Jan; Annual Virginians Convention XXII; Holiday Inn Select/Koger South Conference Center, Richmond; hotel rsvns: 800.397.1034; event registration: 804.991.9304; speaker tape info: 804.861.6992; write: Regions of the Virginians, Box 1959, Chesterfield, VA 23832

2) 12-14 Mar; TACNA IV; A Lifeboat in a Sea of Despair; The Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach; hotel rsvns: 800.446.8199; event registration: 757.523.6612; event info: 757.686.5525; write: TACNA IV, Box 1567, Norfolk, VA 23501

Washington: 27-29 Feb; Circle of Sisters VII; Marriott Hotel, Seattle; hotel rsvns: 206.241.2000; event registration: 253.531.1588; event info: 253.538.5069; speaker tape info: 425.640.7368; write: Seattle Area Service Committee, Box 70404, Seattle, WA 98107; www.circleofsisters.org

2) 14-16 May; Washington Northern Idaho Regional Convention XIX; DoubleTree Hotel, Pasco; event info: 509.783.1108; write: Washington Northern Idaho Region, 2527 W Kennewick Ave, Ste 203, Kennewick, WA 99336

Wisconsin: 30 Mar-2 Apr; Little Girl Grows Up III; Convention of NA; Ramada Inn City Center (Downtown), Milwaukee; hotel rsvns: 800.228.2828; event info: 414.934.0331, 414.372.4285; write: Inner City and Milwaukee Areas of Wisconsin, 1424 S Muskego St, Milwaukee, WI 53212

2) 28-30 May; Inner City Area Convention II; Best Western Midway Hotel/Airport, Milwaukee; hotel rsvns: 877.461.8547; event info: 414.967.8979, 414.931.0147; event registration: 414.225.3790; speaker tape submission deadline: 1 January; write: Inner City Area of Milwaukee, Box 12452, Milwaukee, WI 53212

WSO PRODUCT UPDATE

Italian

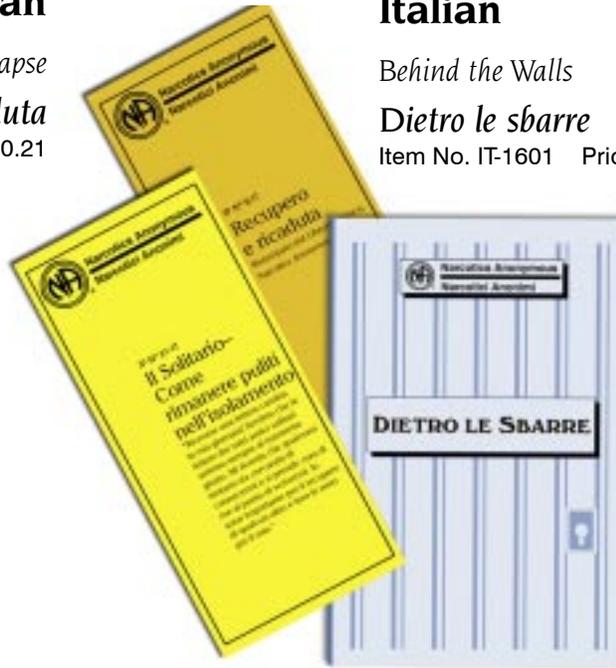
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