

## Commitment, Entry #1 of 3

If there was anything in our lives that required a regular commitment, chances are that we only followed through if it wasn't too hard, if it didn't get in the way of our self-indulgence, or if we happened to feel like it (*NA Step Working Guides, Step Ten, "Spiritual Principles"*).

Being committed is more than just doing something over and over, or showing up when and where we said we would. Commitment involves a conscious decision. We consider what we need or want, what we think is right, and what we are willing to devote our resources to. We take the time to think about benefits and drawbacks, time and energy required, other existing obligations, and whether we are willing to be willing when our enthusiasm goes away.

Our past experiences with phrases like "going to any lengths" and "no matter what" were quite different from commitment in a healthy, spiritual practice. Even in recovery, we remain compulsive. As creatures of habit, we may find ourselves repeating behaviors even when we don't want to. This can show up in our commitments. We keep a commitment out of habit or because no one else has stepped up. We commit impulsively and then back out just as impulsively. Or we stick to an unwanted commitment, resenting ourselves and the commitment from start to finish. In time, we learn a healthier approach.

The daily inventory of Step Ten can improve our ability to make and keep commitments. Reflecting on our lives each day teaches us a great deal about ourselves, including the types of commitments to which we are and are not well suited. Regular inventory helps us become more disciplined and self-aware, and we experience further relief from defects and shortcomings. We grow, and our commitments become deeper and more meaningful as a result.

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*Commitment is more than just showing up. Today, I will draw on Step Ten and honor my commitments with mind, heart, and spirit.*

## Commitment, Entry #2 of 3

In joining together in a commitment to the greater good of Narcotics Anonymous, our own welfare is enhanced beyond measure (*It Works*, Tradition Twelve).

We are people who have a fair amount of direct personal experience with single-minded devotion to a particular cause. Before we came to NA, the cause to which we were so devoted was getting and using drugs. Or, perhaps more precisely, we were committed to our efforts to change the way we felt, predict or control our feelings, or to try to stop feeling altogether.

Once we find NA and surrender to the process of recovery, we begin to shift our devotion from changing how we feel to staying clean, no matter what we feel. Commitment means sticking with something even after our enthusiasm for it wanes, or our mood changes. We commit to our own recovery, and we commit to serving NA. Often it starts simply with choosing a home group and committing to attend regularly. We take a formal commitment, such as greeter or clean-up person. Commitment involves both our feelings and actions. Because we are grateful for our recovery, we feel a sense of commitment to helping NA. That feeling shows in what we do for the greater good of the Fellowship.

For many of us, our commitment to NA is a result of what the program has given us. As we give back, we receive much more. The first gift is the chance to stay clean and find a better way to live. We make many commitments to NA—showing up regularly, being part of one another's recovery, serving our group and service bodies. Our commitments help the Fellowship grow and thrive. The more vibrant and thriving Narcotics Anonymous is, the more we are able to flourish and grow in our own recovery.

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*When I follow through on my commitments to NA, the Fellowship is better for it—and so am I. I will honor my commitment today.*

### Commitment, Entry #3 of 3

Continuing to take a personal inventory means that we form a habit of looking at ourselves, our actions, attitudes and relationships on a regular basis (Basic Text, Step Ten).

"I'm in big trouble when I start to think that I've arrived," the speaker shared. "Lucky for all of us, I'm committed to the daily maintenance of my spiritual condition. I continue to take personal inventory, and that gives me regular reminders that I'm a work in progress."

The Steps lower our tolerance for living an unexamined life. Once we've seen the benefits of regular introspection, we can't un-know what we've learned about ourselves or forget the fulfillment we find in this NA way of improvement. To turn our backs on this path creates discomfort, and our patience for that sort of spiritual pain is not what it used to be—and that's a good thing! We commit to taking stock of our part in every situation and recommit as often as necessary when we let the pace of modern life squeeze out time for contemplation.

Some would say that this commitment is the practical exam for our recovery. We need introspection to grow the way that seeds need soil, sun, and water. Understanding the strengths of our character as well as our vulnerabilities, being aware of our motives, striving to do the right thing, and being willing to make amends when we do harm—all of this is fodder for our personal inventories. As one member noted, "My five favorite character defects may never disappear entirely, but regular inventories help me to see them coming." With that, we can humbly ask for their removal—yes, again—and in that moment, avoid acting out, harming our relationships, and feeling ashamed. Self-reflection pays off. This makes us willing to commit.

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*How am I still tending to my spiritual well-being? Am I still finding my part in situations that trouble me? Do I need to recommit?*