

Hospitality, Entry #1 of 2

Feeling welcome, and welcoming others to our new way of life, helps us see the world as a less hostile place (*Guiding Principles, Tradition Three, "Spiritual Principles"*).

"I don't remember many details about my first NA meetings, but I can tell you this: I left every one of them feeling a little better, a little more hopeful, and a little more convinced that you folks had found a way out, one that could work for me, too," a member shared. "Meetings still have that effect on me." And maybe that's the point of hospitality as a spiritual principle and practice in NA. It's not the individual things that we do or say that are most memorable, it's all of those things taken together and the way we make each other feel. All of us can contribute to a group's hospitality and all of us reap the benefits.

Hospitality gives our various strengths a chance to shine. There are great huggers among us and others who remember the names of new members. Still, others offer a sincere welcome to all of us every week, such as "I'm so glad y'all made it another week 'cause I need each and every one of you." We might notice how the member charged with setting out literature always recruits someone to help them. Could they do this task alone? Sure. But our primary purpose says nothing about tidy stacks of pamphlets. We carry the message by being more inclusive. We help others feel a part of and affirm the same for ourselves. When we tell newcomers "welcome home," we're reminded that we're home, too.

Hospitality is made up of these words and actions—and so many more. The atmosphere of recovery that emerges is greater than the sum of its parts. We embrace the worth and dignity of each of our fellow addicts and of ourselves. Through our hospitable actions, we contribute to a world in which we are all treated with equality and compassion.

I will contribute to the collective efforts that make up NA hospitality and consider how my words and actions can bring some of the same warmth and comradery to my life outside of NA.

Hospitality, Entry #2 of 2

Simply making eye contact or offering a hug to a newcomer can make all the difference to them—and to us (*Guiding Principles, Tradition Three, “Spiritual Principles”*).

The feeling of hospitality and welcome most of us found in the first NA meeting we attended was not just unexpected, but probably unfamiliar, too. So many of us had become all too familiar with being unwelcome nuisances to family, friends, and people in general. “People I used with stopped wanting me around even when I was willing to share my drugs,” one member shared. “Talk about feeling like an outcast!”

That special welcome we felt as newcomers in NA inspires many of us to go out of our way to help other newcomers feel welcome. “When I was in early recovery, I asked my sponsor how to be a home group member,” one addict wrote. “My sponsor told me I could start by making sure that no one new to the meeting ever leaves without being welcomed.”

The act of welcoming others has a big impact on us, too. For people prone to self-centeredness, it’s a great relief to put our own wants, needs, and feelings on the back burner long enough to concern ourselves with how others feel. Our sense of attention and concern expands, allowing us to notice who is around and what they might be feeling. As many of us have heard, we build self-esteem by doing esteemable things. We don’t even need to do much to help anxious, scared, or alienated addicts begin to feel calm, safe, and welcome in NA—and doing so rewards us in ways we cannot measure.

My feeling of connection and belonging in NA increases by leaps and bounds when I welcome others. I will go out of my way to make someone feel welcome today.