

## Patience, Entry #1 of 2

Healing takes time, but it does happen. We must be patient with ourselves (*Living Clean*, Chapter 4, "Sex").

Some of us came into NA hoping for a speedy recovery, like the way we'd bounced back after that accident and got over the flu right quick. We wanted to get addiction behind us, and then we could get on with life. A mixture of hope and denial convinced us that detoxing would fix us. Our experience told a different story. We'd been able to stop using on occasion, but we could never seem to stay stopped. At some point, we realized that we needed more than a spin-dry, and we rallied the patience to persevere on a just for today basis.

We face our lives and ourselves in everyday living, as the Basic Text suggests. We strive for progress while taking care not to expect perfection. Sticking with it calls on us to be patient with the process and ourselves. Recovery is ongoing for folks like us, not something we can look at in the rearview mirror. We consider ourselves recovering, not recovered, addicts.

Practicing patience requires us to be more gentle with ourselves. We attempt to nurture kind and encouraging thoughts, shutting down that harsh self-talk that says, "I should be better than this by now." When we measure our progress against some unrealistic benchmark, or worse, compare our insides to others' outsides, it's no wonder that we come up short. We focus on finding satisfaction with the pace of our progress. Patience serves as a bridge to some much-needed hope, faith, and humility as we learn to trust the process.

We'll need all of these spiritual principles and more as we navigate the minefields of our past with the Twelve Steps and a sponsor's guidance. Trauma and abuse cast a long shadow on many of our lives; we learn to be patient with ourselves as an expression of love. We come to understand our past without allowing it to define us. All of this takes time, time that's available to us because we're learning to practice patience.

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*I invite patience to help me find satisfaction with my progress and access the resources I need for continued recovery and healing.*

## Patience, Entry #2 of 2

Having patience for discussion, or waiting until the next meeting before moving forward with a decision, saves the energy and goodwill lost when hasty actions have consequences (*Guiding Principles, Tradition Two, "For Groups"*).

The work we do in NA service is important. When we serve well, more addicts will have the chance to hear our message and find recovery. We make a huge difference in the lives of addicts. Our sense of urgency for helping addicts can go a long way in helping us to stay motivated to serve well. We strive to be efficient, thorough, and creative in our efforts. Lives are on the line, after all.

In our efforts to be expedient, we run the risk of making mistakes. Adhering to our Traditions, local laws, and good old-fashioned common sense may require careful planning, consideration, and, sometimes, lengthy discussion. Seemingly endless debates can put our "principles before personalities" muscles to the test. The more complicated things get, the more difficult it is to communicate well.

We want answers and solutions as soon as possible. If an idea requires more time and thought than we want to give, we either dismiss it out of hand or throw caution to the wind and just do it. In both cases, we are doing ourselves—and NA—a disservice. Scrapping a good idea, we don't want to think through can mean missing out on a chance to reach more addicts. Putting a half-baked idea into action can lead to unexpected complications or consequences.

Patience is more than simply waiting things out; it's making the commitment to be present through the process. When we devote time and mental energy to challenging discussions--even when they're mind-numbingly tedious--we honor ourselves, our fellow trusted servants, and the addicts yet to hear our message.

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*Patience is more than just waiting for something to be done. In my service, I will commit to being present for the process.*