**Fidelity, Entry 1 of 2**

*Fidelity suggests that we are true and faithful to our message, that it is consistent on all occasions.*


As a spiritual principle, fidelity signifies loyalty and commitment. We clarify our shared understanding of the disease of addiction and our common solution when we share the NA message with fidelity. Translators think similarly about fidelity as a concept in their work. In translations—NA or otherwise—fidelity refers to how well a translated document corresponds to the original. Although computers can substitute the words of one language with those of another, the results often make little sense. It takes the human touch and the work of skilled translators to convey the meaning, style, and tone of any piece of writing. They do more than transcribe; they interpret.

In Narcotics Anonymous, local translations committees and their professional partners assure that translated literature is faithful to our message. That’s no easy task. Each new language group has to grapple with words and phrases like “addict,” “clean,” and “the disease of addiction,” to figure out how to capture their meaning and spirit in the target language. NA members serving on local translations committees play an important role in ensuring fidelity. Their experience with the NA program and often impressive language skills helps to ensure that translated NA literature precisely reflects the ideas and spirit of the original.

Whether translating literature, speaking at a unity day celebration, or sharing with our home group, we strive to use NA language with the same precision. A clear NA message is about more than avoiding certain words. Clarity comes from living the NA way and addressing the disease of addiction with our program of recovery. When our predecessors wrote, “We admitted we were powerless over our addiction...” they focused Step One on the disease, not the drugs. This stroke of genius makes the First Step relevant to members at any phase of recovery. When we use NA language to convey our experience with fidelity, we contribute to an atmosphere of identification for all to hear.

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*My experience, our experience, is reflected by the NA message. I will try to draw those connections when I share and make a mental note of unspoken links as I listen to others.*
Fidelity, Entry 2 of 2

As we practice honesty, integrity, and fidelity, we no longer have to keep track of our stories or cover our tracks.

—Living Clean, Chapter 3, “A Spiritual Path”

While addiction puts a serious strain on our ability to maintain fidelity to the people who matter to us, recovery allows us to show up for our loved ones in ways we may never have thought possible. Freedom from active addiction takes away one incredibly large barrier to our fidelity— the use of drugs. Once the drugs are out of the way, it is common in early recovery to wonder why our family and friends may hesitate to trust us completely. As we stay clean longer and gain greater relief from self-centeredness, we begin to see that the drugs weren’t the only barrier to our fidelity, and we need more than simple abstinence to be able to truly be present for the people in our lives.

If we focus more on what we’re not doing—using drugs, cheating, stealing, telling blatant lies—it might be easy to think that we are being more faithful and loyal in our relationships than we actually are. Our character defects, even when they aren’t glaring, can still get in the way of our ability to truly connect to the people in our lives.

“Step Six was eye-opening for me,” a member wrote. “I had a lousy track record with relationships, and I kept thinking I was just meeting all the wrong people. My sponsor helped me identify some character defects, and I realized it wasn’t them—it was me! Thank goodness for stepwork.”

Putting our behavior under the Step Six microscope can be a bit nauseating at times. Especially when we’ve been oblivious to a particular defect, it is disturbing to see it as a pattern and notice it in action again and again, as often happens when working Step Six. The path to fidelity—to being who we want and need to be in our relationships—is in becoming entirely ready to let go of patterns that stand in the way, and humbly asking for help in doing so.

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Practicing fidelity allows me to be the truest version of myself for those I love. With the help of my sponsor, I will work to bring the best of myself into my relationships today.