Passion, Entry 1 of 2

*Something different happens as we move into recovery motivated by passion, hope, and excitement. We are released into our own lives.*

—*Living Clean*, Chapter 1, “Why We Stay”

Some of us spend our early days of recovery in NA more conscious of what we were trapped in and what we are escaping—compulsion, isolation, alienation, desperation—than aware of what we want in our lives. We see right away that people in NA have gained some freedom from the consequences of addiction, and hope keeps us coming back. It didn’t take long to realize that many recovering addicts get much more than freedom from the cage of addiction—they gain freedom to explore the world outside of that cage.

“When I was using, every other interest took a back seat to my disease,” one member wrote. “In one of my earliest meetings, I heard an addict share about going into the wilderness to get back into rock climbing after 15 years away from it. I had no interest in climbing rocks, but the idea of being released into the wild was so exciting to me. I decided to find a passion of my own.”

That’s how it goes in recovery: We regain the ability to pursue our interests. Rock climbing, songwriting, restoring old cars—our lives become our own to live. For many of us, the drive and excitement to follow our own interests grows out of our passion for recovery and carrying the message. Another member wrote, “I was so stoked about life without drugs in early recovery. As soon as I had enough cleantime, people invited me to share on H&I panels left and right, and I felt like I had a purpose. After years of thinking the world was full of threats, I started seeing opportunities everywhere.”

*Where addiction limits us and makes our world smaller, recovery opens us up to the world. What opportunities are on my horizon today?*
Passion, Entry 2 of 2

*Passion is a lot like desperation: It is a motivating, energizing force that can propel us forward.*

—*Living Clean*, Chapter 1, “Desperation to Passion”

The gift of desperation doesn’t look the same for all of us. One member quipped: “You can get off at any floor on the way down to hell.” All of us were propelled into NA by despair, pain, and fear. And—over time—we’re able to harness that energy to transform it into enough passion and excitement—even joy—to help us stay clean another day, grow spiritually, and live creatively and with purpose!

*Living Clean* reminds us: “Making the shift from desperation to passion is a First Step issue.” In desperation, we surrender to being powerless over our addiction, and ultimately surrender to the first steps on our path of a new life and to the purpose of carrying the NA message. The member continued, “After my initial surrender, the changes I saw in myself fueled my passion for recovery! I was energized by the potential of what could come next.” Like that initial surrender, this desperation-to-passion shift isn’t a one-time deal. Despair still happens in recovery. But we can allow it to motivate us, driving us to make needed changes to our program and reigniting our passion to persevere with purpose.

Passion, like desperation, doesn’t manifest in the same ways for all of us. Our personalities absolutely play a part in how our passion is revealed—and our mood also affects how we experience it. What is burning, purposeful, and creative passion on one day—excitement for sponsorship, motivation to serve, strongly held conviction—may look more like quiet fidelity to our program or begrudging perseverance on another. Although the fires may burn differently, they all propel us forward. Our passions don’t always remain fixed either. We may revisit ones long forgotten and discover new ones. We’re free to passionately pursue the things that bring us joy and nurture our spirits—both in the rooms of NA and out in the world.

*Passion isn’t just a feeling. It’s an energy I’ll use today to move forward in my program, in my relationships, in my purpose.*