

GREY BOOK

Reflections



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"GOD, grant us knowledge that we may write according to Your Divine precepts; instill in us a sense of Your purpose, make us servants of Your will and grant us a bond of selflessness that this may truly be Your work, not ours, in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction."

REVIEW AND INPUT FORM

NAME:

HOMEGROUP:

Please review the material carefully, then check either square 1, or 2, below:

1:

We find the material complete and satisfactory in its present form.

2:

In order that our book, be complete and satisfactory we recommend the following corrections.

If you have checked number 2, please list the corrections you would make. Be sure to include sentence number and page number for reference purposes (see example). Please list these corrections and if possible include pages to be corrected (or scanned pages/photocopies of these pages) with your list.

Example:

PAGE #	LINE #	COMMENTS

Send your input to nahelp.org@gmail.com before April 15th 2019.

Note: when sending in newly written reflections please make sure the text is send in digital form with normal type setting.

PREFACE

The material in this book was drawn from the personal experiences of recovering addicts within the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The material written in this book is based on lines found in the Memphis 1981 review and input form of our Basic Text also known as the Grey Book.

It all started in May 2013 when a Group from Allentown PA had the wish for a daily reflection book written by addicts for addicts in an open participation process. In 2014 this Group, together with other Groups, sponsored a literature writing conference in Longwood FL, USA to start the process of writing.

Several members attended from different States including Kentucky, Ohio, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina and South Carolina. Among these members were also those who participated in writing our Basic Text.

In the past 5 years, more writing has been done at literature conferences and in N.A. Home Groups from all over the world to the open participatory literature process. This input has been put together in this book named the "Grey Book Reflections". We'd like to encourage N.A. Home Groups and members to get involved and participate in this open participation process. In the back of the book we have put directions on how and where to send the input to.

In service,

The N.A. Home Groups and Fellowship Service Conference.

"GOD, grant us knowledge that we may write according to Your Divine precepts; instill in us a sense of Your purpose, make us servants of Your will and grant us a bond of selflessness that this may truly be Your work, not ours, in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction."

February 1981, Third World Literature Conference Prayer

**"Being self-supporting is an important part of our new way of
life"
Grey book, chapter six, Tradition Seven, page 106, lines 13-14**

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Self-support in Narcotics Anonymous goes well beyond simply financing our groups. Not only does it involve practicing this principle in our personal finances, it involves giving of our time and talents to ensure that services remain directly responsible to the groups they serve.

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All of our Traditions fit together. Groups are autonomous. Services are not. Services are not part of N.A., but neither are they outside enterprises. They are tools which are exclusive to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous; they are directly responsible to the groups who create them. It is essential that for our groups to remain autonomous that our services are not. When services become autonomous, they are no longer responsible to the groups. In some cases, we have even seen groups begin taking their direction from service bodies.

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One of the ways we ensure that our services do not become autonomous is for them to be dependent on and directly funded by the groups. This also means services require the time and talents of our member-addicts for them to run.

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By directly financing our services as well as giving of our time and talent by doing things like writing literature by addicts for addicts we not only ensure that we remain self-supporting as groups and as a fellowship, but we protect the authority and autonomy of the groups (Traditions Two and Four), we protect the integrity of Tradition Nine. This ensures that it is the groups who are responsible to carry the message to the addict who still suffers (Tradition Five) and that this is not delegated to services to do for us.

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When everyone pitches in and not only supports their groups financially, but also contributes of their time and talent we avoid mistakes of the past like self-supporting committees relying on their own fundraisers, selling N.A. literature for a profit, or hiring professional writers rather than relying on the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. We also find that when all members give freely we avoid the problem of a very few doing the bulk of the work. This helps us avoid the trap of service positions carrying prestige (Tradition Six). In fact, when everyone supports services through the groups, we find there is very little for any one individual to do. Which promotes unity and anonymity (Traditions one and twelve).

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In the moment: I will realize that the Traditions all rely on each other. I will live the Seventh Tradition by supporting my group and the services we create by not only dropping a few bucks in the basket, but by giving of my talents and time that those who come after me may have what I was freely given. In this way I too will remain free of the lie of active addiction.

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"Day by day, we discover the magnitude of the Third Step. This is the Step where we come into contact with the sanity we are promised in Step Two." 1
Grey book, chapter four, Step Three, page 39, lines 28-29 4

Sanity for us is a process; a course of action. Step Three is our very first experience with that process of returning to sanity. By making the decision to relinquish our own will, we are relieved of the burden of self. 5
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Step Three, however is a decision. Decisions are merely the starting point. Any decision we make is meaningless if not followed by action. The relief and calm we feel in making the decision of Step Three will not be of any lasting consequence if we do not follow through with this decision. Some have said, "Step Three is an absolute commitment to work the remaining Steps". 8
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Indeed, the Steps which follow are the process by which we turn our will and our lives over. Steps 10-12 even give us a means of daily upkeep. A way in which to not only maintain this new way of life based on the decisions and admissions we made in the first three Steps, but a means of continual improvement. 13
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Step Three, itself is not a complete restoration to sanity. It is only the first sweet taste of the serenity to come with a restoration to sanity. By the time we reach Step Twelve we realize we have attained more than a simple restoration to sanity. We have experienced a total spiritual awakening! But it is only through continued practice and application of the principles found in our Steps that our sanity is sustained, and our spiritual awakening expanded and improved. 17
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In the moment: I will practice the principles of the program found in the Steps and participate in the Fellowship through the principles of the Traditions. Today I will continue to discover and experience the magnitude of Step Three, by working the remaining Steps and receiving the benefits and promises they have to offer. 23
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1 **“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever**
2 **reminding us to place principles before personalities.”**
3 **Gray Book p. 115 Tradition Twelve**

4 Part of Anonymity means to remain nameless, not taking credit for. It also means being
5 equal and not single out any person. The Principle of Anonymity is so huge it has many
6 Spiritual Principles within it. Anonymity is also the foundation of our whole Program, our
7 Twelve and Twelve. Placing the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous ahead of our
8 and each other’s personality makes our Recovery possible. This main Principle also pro-
9 tects us from ourselves.

10 It also helps to protect N.A. from us. Principles before personalities allow the common
11 welfare of N.A. to come before our personalities and individual needs. Principles before
12 personalities allow God Conscience to be created in the Group and not in any one per-
13 son. Anonymity makes it possible for any drug addict to become a member of N.A. We
14 don’t differentiate between men and women, creed, sexual preference, age, race and
15 social status. Autonomy with the Principle of Anonymity means not to label a Group better
16 or less than any other Groups. This can create disunity. The Group’s Primary Purpose is
17 its Anonymity, together we carry one message. When we lend the Narcotics Anonymous
18 name to anything outside of N.A., our Anonymity is destroyed. Personalities would take
19 over through money, property and prestige. This would destroy our Primary Purpose,
20 and many would die. Anonymity allows each member to contribute their own personal
21 share of time and money Anonymously. Principles before personalities and profession
22 allow our members equal status with other members. Direct Responsibilities to those they
23 serve, committees are not Autonomous and must follow the Group’s Conscience. Service
24 is for those we serve, is a good example of Anonymity. Not taking personal sides with
25 our personal opinions keeps the individuals and Groups from public opinions. Keeping
26 our personal Anonymity in the public spotlight assures others from using our personali-
27 ties to judge N.A. Inner Anonymity of this last Tradition enables us to place The Spiritual
28 Principles of Narcotics Anonymous before ourselves and others, in all our Traditions.

29 *In the moment; Putting Principles before personalities protects ours and other’s Anonymity*
30 *and ultimately ours and their Recovery.*

**"The thing we do is check for the surfacing of defects early on by
working Step Ten daily".** 1
Gray book pg 55 lines 34-35 2
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The Tenth Step asks us to continue taking our daily personal inventory and promptly 4
admit when we were wrong. The reason we take our personal daily inventory is to prevent 5
the corrective part of this step as addicts, we sometimes don't know when we are wrong, 6
we have to work a step to find out. We have to examine our actions and reactions. We 7
have to monitor our emotions, feelings and fantasies throughout the day. When we fall 8
short we have the opportunity to make the corrections and start our day over again. We 9
can also feel good about our recovery when we practice our spiritual principles and feel 10
good about ourselves. We show our gratitude by thanking God in quiet moments. At night 11
time before bed, we can recall our day and all our interactions with others. After taking 12
our inventory, We are able to see where we fell short. We can decide if any amends need 13
to be made. 14

If we practice spiritual principles in all our affairs we will falter less. Over time by working 15
steps and having a constant conscious contact with our higher power, we are able to see 16
ourselves coming. The Tenth Step has a negative reputation, because it talks about being 17
wrong and making amends. The Tenth Step is also asking during that inventory, to look at 18
our assets and to practice them in our daily affairs. This daily practice of our assets and 19
spiritual principles make us better people. 20

*In the moment; we will practice the spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous in our 21
attitudes and behaviors, in doing so, some of our defects can be minimized, and in some 22
cases removed.* 23

1 **"The addict would find from the start as much identification as**
2 **each needed to convince himself that he could stay clean, by**
3 **example of others who had recovered for many years".**
4 **Gray book pg 133 first paragraph**

5 For many years addicts were dying, unnecessarily, from the disease of addiction. We had
6 no where could go, except for jails and institutions. It was illegal for addicts to assem-
7 ble or meet, even for the sake of recovery. Many of us went to other fellowships or other
8 places. Our identification as addicts was still not met, many of us continued to die. Ours,
9 is a disease of feelings and emotions, not the symptom which is the use of drugs. When
10 Narcotics Anonymous was started addicts finally found somewhere they could identify
11 with others. This identification was what made ur recovery possible. One of the most pow-
12 erful statement a newcomer can hear, at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting, is the power-
13 lessness and surrender to the disease of addiction, from another addict. The first chapter
14 in the basic text; who is an addict, talks about our identification first comes from our drug
15 use, from our powerlessness, the living to use, and using to live. The identification of the
16 feelings of hopelessness and isolation came next. After seeing people like us staying
17 clean and finding a new way to live, we start to experience hope, a spiritual principle long
18 lost for so many of us. We finally felt that we no longer had to use, we also, like so many,
19 could stay clean. We finally found a place where we felt we belonged. We learned about
20 the spiritual principle of empathy, "that wordless language of recognition, belief and faith".
21 For us, empathy meant, your pain in my heart. As others shared their experience, strength
22 and hope with us, we nodded our heads in approval and said, " me too". We finally were
23 home. Isolation which is at the center of our disease, began to disappear. We became a
24 part of a whole. Our basic text says, "we become fully whole and wholly free".

25 *In the moment; we will learn to identify and not compare, with others. We will serve as*
26 *examples of the power that keeps us clean. We share this divine gift, with all those who*
27 *come after us.*

“Now we live a new outlook, that of caring and sharing the N.A. way. We are surrounded by like-minded addicts, who once were at the depths of misery and despair, and now serious about their own recovery and helping the suffering addict.” 1
Gray Book, pp. 159-160 Lines 33-3 Chapter Ten 2
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“A New Way To Live”, this is part of our Message in Narcotics Anonymous. What does that mean to us? What our Higher Power has revealed to us is that Practicing these Principles and Sharing this Gift with others is a New Way to Live. In active addiction this wasn’t the way we Lived. In active addiction, we did not Practice Spiritual Principles, material possessions did not change our way of life. Most of us, while using, did not care much about anyone or anything. We put our addiction before anything, including our Loved ones. Arriving at Narcotics Anonymous we met others that were in the grip of despair, as we were. They now seemed to be Free and reasonably content. Out of the ashes, they found Hope. They Shared their Hope and showed us that wordless language of Empathy. 6
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It was the Narcotics Anonymous Message of Hope and the Promise of Freedom. We were told that to receive this Gift of Life, we had to put the effort to get it. Once receiving this Gift, we had to give it away to other suffering addicts in order to keep it. Today we use our past as a stepping stone and a touchstone for Spiritual Growth. The worst day of our Lives is now considered the best day of our Lives because it enables our Unconditional Surrender. Surrendering to the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous we are set Free. We work Steps with our N.A. Sponsors. We develop a Relationship with a Higher Power of our own Understanding. We answer to the cry for help from others that are newly arriving to N.A. We attend Meetings to Carry Our Message, and we serve the Fellowship in form of service. Our Recovery is enforced as we Share it with others. 15
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In the moment; We will not forget why we are Clean, Just For Today. We will show Gratitude by taking some time to Share freely what was so freely Shared with us. 25
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1 **“The Eleventh Step helps us, in the face of a problem, to be aware**
2 **of God.”**
3 **Gray Book pg 58 Lines 10-11**

4 By the time we get to this Step, most of us reach an Awareness that we’re not alone.
5 We see and feel the Power that first got us Clean is still with us. Throughout our Journey
6 we’ve experienced miracles that we couldn’t explain. We’ve experienced the Strength
7 and Courage to go through Life on Life’s Terms without picking up or creating havoc in
8 our Lives. In Narcotics Anonymous we see the evidence of this same Power at work in the
9 Lives of others.

10 We see Newcomers stay Clean and Hope returned, as their Lives are transformed. We
11 also experienced periods of Peace of Mind and a Serenity that we never knew before.
12 Our Gray Book says that: “We begin to find a peace unmatched to a drug-induced
13 high.”

14 We improve our Relationship with the God Of Our Understanding and depend on God
15 through the good times as well as in the difficult times. Our Seventh Step reminds us that
16 Humility is a good state for an addict to be in. Reliance on God enforces that we’re not
17 alone, and that we can’t do this by ourselves through our own accord. Reliance replaces
18 compliance as we continue this Constant Conscious Contact. We no longer just Work the
19 Steps just to stay Clean, even though that is necessary, but we also Work the Steps to
20 Experience the Spiritual Awakenings that the Principles make possible. Our Awareness
21 helps us not to forget that in the midst of a storm, our Higher Power is there waiting and
22 willing to help us.

23 *In the moment: We will not forget that the Power that got us clean is still with us, and will*
24 *continue to be with us in this Journey, if we invite it.*

1 **"A lot happens in one day, both negative and positive, and if**
2 **we don't take time to appreciate both, chances are we will miss**
3 **something that will help us grow".**
4 **Gray book pg 147 lines 24-26**

5 As using addicts a lot happened to us in one day, but most of it was negative and most
6 of it was self-inflicted. In the past we never learned from our mistakes. We continued to
7 repeat the same mistakes expecting different results. In some cases we knew what the
8 results would be. When something positive happened to us we felt unworthy, so we didn't
9 take time to appreciate it. We lived with the doom and gloom, and waited for the other
10 shoe to fall off. After arriving to Narcotics Anonymous and started adapting our lives to the
11 program we began to experience life, both the negative and the positive, this time clean.
12 We heard from our predecessors that when we stop using we would feel better. They were
13 right! Anger, fear, remorse, guilt and shame were felt better, lol. But, we also felt hope
14 and freedom. Some of these feelings were long lost to most of us. What we experience,
15 through living the spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous, is that we can learn from
16 both experiences. We now could appreciate the negative because we can learn valuable
17 lessons from it. We also learn to appreciate the positive, because now we feel worthy of it
18 and use it as a touchstone to reality. This relationship with reality becomes our spirituality.
19 In Narcotics Anonymous we share this precious gift of recovery and awareness with one
20 another. We share that we don't have to use no matter what we're going through. We learn
21 to survive our feelings and use our experiences as reference points for growth. We grow
22 from each experience. We share the message of hope and the promise of freedom from
23 active addiction with the others in and out of Narcotics Anonymous.

24 *In the moment; we will learn this too shall pass. We appreciate both negative and positive*
25 *experiences. We will learn from them and share our feelings, thoughts and solutions with*
26 *others.*

**“We now know if we pray to do God’s will, we will receive what’s
 best for us.”** 1
Gray Book pg 58 Lines 14-15 2
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When we first came in to Narcotics Anonymous, we were told that the only thing we had 4
 to change was everything. This statement scared most of us, after all, we had built our 5
 whole lives around addiction. Our wills were accompanied by our defects of character. 6
 Our defects were the tools of the disease, they were our survival skills. The first defect to 7
 go, was our use of drugs. Recovery was not possible unless we got clean first. Total and 8
 Complete Abstinence was foreign to us, and we didn’t think it was possible. Our Second 9
 Step was the Solution to the void Step One left. When our obsession was lifted we gained 10
 Hope, that anything was possible. However, these defects were part of us, and we won- 11
 dered what would we become if we let them go. This hesitation kept us sick, we were still 12
 acting out. Many were still smoking cigarettes, which was ultimately hurting us. Some of 13
 us were acting out sexually, blocking ourselves and others from recovering. Some of us 14
 were still stealing and being dishonest in our interactions with others. We had to hit bot- 15
 tom with these parts of ourselves, before we were Willing to ask for help. We Pray to our 16
 Higher Power, who helped us get clean, to help us with this other stuff. As we Progress in 17
 the Steps, we see that each Step requires a deeper Surrender. Freedom is our ultimate 18
 goal, Freedom from drugs, Freedom to choose our own Higher Power. Freedom from 19
 self, others, and the world at large. When we clear the wreckage that’s in the God Of Our 20
 Understanding’s way, that Power can work in our lives. As we Pray and ask for Power to 21
 carry out God’s Will for us, we see God’s Will is what we wanted for ourselves all along. 22
 Who wouldn’t want Health, the means to make a Living, or a Family or Mate to share our 23
 Lives. 24

In the moment; We will align our wills with God’s Will and all will be well. 25

1 **"Everything that occurs in the course of N.A. Service must be**
2 **motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message**
3 **of recovery to the addict who still suffers".**
4 **Gray book pg v third paragraph**

5 Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the still suffering addict, that's why we
6 exist. For us to carry the N.A. message we have to have a message to carry. When we
7 first come into Narcotics Anonymous we are told that a commitment will keep us coming
8 back, and as a result we stay clean. That's service in a group setting, and that's in the
9 beginning. That shouldn't be our primary motive once we are here for a while and start
10 experiencing recovery. We start to share this precious gift with others. Service is one way
11 of giving away what was so freely given to us. Our motive should be love, selfless service
12 should be our true motive. We have to ask ourselves do we have service based recovery,
13 or do we have recovery based service. Service might keep us clean, but are we recov-
14 ering? Are we using service to take the place of Step work? Are we missing meetings to
15 do Service commitments in service committees? Are we holding on to service commit-
16 ments past our rotation term, because it keeps us clean? Is that what we mean by selfless
17 service? Are we truly motivated to carry the message because we care for the suffering
18 addict, or for our own selfish motives? These are the questions we should be asking our-
19 selves to determine if our motives have motives.

20 Our service to N.A. Should be pure and not motivated by selfishness, money, power or
21 prestige. As long as we keep our primary purpose up front we will reach addicts and save
22 lives.

23 *In the moment: we will check our motives for doing service, we will make sure that our*
24 *service is recovery based, and not service based recovery.*

“The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous are a progressive recovery process established in our normal living.” 1
Gray Book pg 147 Lines 31-33 2
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The Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions are what makes up our Spiritual Program. 4
The Spiritual Awakening that results from those Steps and these Traditions, are what 5
makes Recovery possible. The disease of addiction affected every area of our lives. The 6
Program of N.A. offers Spiritual Tools as the Solution to a life affected by the disease of 7
addiction. Our Literature says that these are a set Principles that are written so simply 8
that we can follow them in our daily lives. It also says that the most important thing about 9
them is that they work. Narcotics Anonymous brings the dead back to life. Not only does 10
it offer a New Way Of Life, it gives us a life we never knew possible. Narcotics Anonymous 11
is the only proven Solution to a disease that has plagued the world for decades. For the 12
Program to work, we have to Surrender to its Spiritual Principles. One of the first Spiritual 13
Principles is Total and Complete Abstinence of any mind mood altering substance. The 14
Program cannot work if our minds and bodies are clouded with drugs. As we practice this 15
Living Program, our Spirits Awaken. We tap into a Power Greater Than Ourselves and it 16
becomes our Greatest Source of Strength. The disease of addiction is fatal, incurable and 17
progressive. We are granted a Daily Reprieve contingent on our Spiritual Maintenance 18
and Sharing this Program with those who want it. 19

Our Primary Purpose in Narcotics Anonymous is to Recover and help others find this Way 20
of Life. 21

*In the moment; We will Practice these Spiritual Principles in our Way of Living. We will 22
Share this Way of Life with those who seek it.* 23

1 **"As we recover we will often find ourselves saying and doing**
2 **things that suddenly make no sense to us. Even if we've been**
3 **doing them for years. We literally see our mistakes"**
4 **Grey book pg. 83 lines 26-28**

5 Our old ways of living life have to go. When using we pick up a whole arsenal of "survival"
6 mechanisms, that help us while we are living that lifestyle of insanity, chaos, and drug
7 induced behaviors. These behaviors help us to survive in a lifestyle that will always lead
8 to jails, institutions, and death. The problem is the journey to these ends can be a long
9 and hard road with many years of suffering. Once we make it to the program, and get and
10 stay clean for a while, we notice a

11 Fog lifting from our minds, and can see the world a little clearer. Some of the natural
12 behaviors that we have spent so many years developing now have no place in our new
13 life. This is a part of the recovery process, is learning to let go of these behaviors, and
14 the defects that cause them. After doing a little work on ourselves, we will have the ability
15 to be aware of these behaviors as they are happening, after they have happened, and
16 eventually before they happen, so we now have a choice to change that part of ourselves.
17 Continued growth in the program, along with time clean from all drugs will enable us to
18 eventually drop these old behaviors and replace them with new behaviors founded in
19 spiritual principles.

20 *In the moment: I will ask God for help to not act out on old behaviors, and to be mindful*
21 *of my actions. I will be grateful for the growth that I have in my life today, and continue to*
22 *ask for help, so that I may continue to grow into new spiritually based behaviors towards*
23 *others, and myself.*

1 **"We may tire mentally in repeating our new ideas and tire phys-**
2 **ically in our new activities, yet we know that if we fail to repeat**
3 **them we will surely take up our old practices."**
4 **grey book page 118; from the italicized header (no line number)**

5 These words can be among the oldest and most valuable that our experience has pro-
6 duced. We will all experience "the old bugaboos" at some point in our recovery. This lets
7 us now we do not have to act on these feelings.

8 But the truth is, we are human. Many of us will, at some point in our recovery, slack off
9 on those daily activities that keep us clean. At some point many of us do take up our old
10 practices. Thankfully, taking up our old practices is about behavior. Whether that behavior
11 is trying to control and taking on too many service commitments, or hiding out and doing
12 nothing we begin to behave in old ways long before we lose our clean time. We don't
13 have to get to the final stages of relapse (using) to correct our behaviors. In fact, we will
14 not "think" our way out of these lulls in our recovery. Only the surrender and actions that
15 got us clean in the first place will help us maintain and grow our recovery. This is what
16 we mean when we say, "we can't think our way to better living, we have to live our way to
17 better thinking.

18 So, what do we do? We simply do. We put one foot in front of the other and trust the
19 process that has given us so much thus far. Maybe that means we pick up our Step work
20 again. Maybe it means we start attending meetings more regularly. Maybe we have not
21 been praying. Maybe we call our sponsor. Maybe we even start writing those meditations
22 for a literature project we promised we would contribute to all those months back.

23 The grey book and our basic text both go one to tell us that these times can be the peri-
24 ods of greatest growth in our recovery. Whether they spell our growth or our destruction
25 depends entirely on our behavior - will we surrender or take our will and our lives back?

26 *In the moment: I will put one foot in front of the other. I will live the Steps and Traditions to*
27 *the best of my ability. I will share my pain with my sponsor and my experience, strength*
28 *and hope with the still suffering addict. I will remember the program that got me clean is*
29 *the program that will keep me clean.*

**"Slow down and live life."
-grey book page 130; line 30**

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In active addiction, we ran from life. We medicated life. We tried to convince ourselves we celebrated life. We definitely manipulated life. Sometimes we even tried to keep up with life. Eventually we hid from life. We were unable to enjoy life without the use of drugs. Even then, what we thought was enjoying life was really just another lie. What started out as "getting high", eventually became "getting loaded", and finally turned into "getting by".

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It is little wonder that when we come into recovery we do things differently. "we become acceptable, responsible, productive members of...society". Many of us take on new responsibilities both in and out of N.A. We learn how to be a spouse, significant other, parent, sibling, friend, daughter or son. In the course of actually "living life" we can very easily forget to slow down. Sometimes we can get so caught up in "doing life" that we forget to "live life".

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Sometimes we find many of the same problems or defects of character haunting us in our clean time that brought us to our knees when we were using. We can get divorced, lose custody of children, destroy relationships and lose jobs as a direct result of our behavior, even while clean. At some point we realize some of the labels we may have been proudly wearing, like "work-addiction " or "service junkie" may not have been as healthy as we first thought. We come to realize that maybe being a "junkie" or addict was the problem, not just the drugs. We continue our restoration to sanity as we realize the disease of addiction is about our behaviors, not just the substances that were the most glaring symptoms.

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When we apply the Steps and Traditions were being able to slow down and see what is really important. We are able to let family members have responsibilities and let other addicts do some service. We no longer need to be in control and run the entire show. At some point, as we live the Narcotics Anonymous program, we are able to "slow down and live life".

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In the moment: I will give myself a break. I will not just do life; I will live it. Through the Steps and Traditions of N.A. I will enjoy the life I have been given.

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“As addicts, we have trouble with acceptance which is critical to our recovery. When we refuse to practice acceptance, we are, in effect, still denying our faith in a Higher Power.” 1
Baby blue, p. 69 2
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With self-centeredness as the core of our disease, we tend to put a big twist on life’s 5
storyline: somewhere in our minds we not only become the narrator but also the writer of 6
the script. As long as things go according to the plot in our head we seem to be okay, but 7
unexpected changes can surely present a struggle. We find that the source of much of 8
our strife comes not from life’s occurrences but from our inability to accept them. When 9
we relinquish the desire to control and accept the things we cannot change, we allow for 10
a Higher Power to work in our lives. 11

It’s safe to say that most of us did not plan on our lives ending up this way. We came to 12
Narcotics Anonymous fearful, hurting, or even angry. Some of us got here with parts of 13
our story that were hard to accept. By accepting our disease and all that it entails we are 14
able to start healing. 15

*In the moment: I do not have to be the director, writer, or narrator of my story. Today I will 16
practice acceptance and trust that a Higher Power will help me through all that I encoun- 17
ter 18*

1 ***“..Addiction had become a destructive power greater than our-***
2 ***selves. It logically follows that there can be a constructive power***
3 ***greater than ourselves”***
4 ***Grey book, page 35, line 34***

5 Many of us had trouble coming to terms with the possibility of a Higher Power. While in
6 active addiction trust in anybody or anything came hard. When we did trust, we often paid
7 a price. God was no exception in our twisted way of thinking.

8 We see the evidence of a power greater than ourselves all around us. Perhaps it is in the
9 strength of the Fellowship or the undeniable energy we experience in meetings.

10 We begin to see what is impossible for us alone becomes possible with help. When we
11 looked at the world logically, regardless of the evidence we saw, it was undeniable that
12 there was a power greater than ourselves. All around us is a constructive power for good,
13 not just the destructive forces that brought us to our knees.

14 “The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.” When we feel like we
15 don't belong, we disqualify ourselves

16 *In the moment: I will believe it is possible that a power greater than myself can restore*
17 *me to a sound state of mind. I will stay open to the evidence of a power greater than*
18 *myself all around me. Regardless of what I think this source of power may be, I have only*
19 *to believe in the possibility of such a force existing. This may calm my troubled mind. To*
20 *work this Step, I only need to be open- minded to the possibility.*

1 ***“Being open-minded allows us to hear something that might***
2 ***save our lives.”***
3 ***-grey book, chapter four, Step Twelve, page 66, line 2***

4 Even with time living the N.A. Program we can find ourselves unwilling to listen to others
5 or we may enter into situations with preconceived notions.

6 Whether we are newcomers, old timers, or something in between, we can all fall victim
7 to the character defect of closed-mindedness. Maybe an addict sharing in a meeting
8 is someone we dislike; maybe the meeting we are going to uses a meeting format with
9 which we don't agree. Perhaps we do not like what was shared at the beginning of a
10 meeting and find ourselves letting our judgmental nature discount what was initially
11 shared. We need to stay open-minded not only in meetings but in our everyday life.

12 *In the moment: we try “to practice these principles in all our affairs” as we practice Step*
13 *Twelve, we realize that “today we have a choice” does not just refer to using, it applies to*
14 *all areas of our lives.*

“There are no musts in N.A.”
-grey book, various locations

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Are there really no musts in na? Doesn't our literature constantly tell us we must do x if we want y? Aren't our Traditions non-negotiable? 3
4

All of these statements are, in fact, true. No one is going to make us do anything in N.A. Our Steps are strongly suggested as a program of recovery because most of us know we would not stay clean without them. When we apply the Steps in our life we find a way to be happy, joyous and free. 5
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As we read our literature we are reminded that if we want what others have we must be willing to do what others have done. No one is going to force you to live clean, be happy, or follow spiritual principles these are things that are found on your own. 9
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We have tried it all and found that this is the only path that will lead to freedom. If you made it this far, you too have spent a lifetime searching for an answer. We are merely offering you our solution. 12
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There truly are no “musts” in N.A. – only the hard-won lessons we learn when we fail to live by the spiritual principles found within our Steps and Traditions. The lessons learned from the consequences of our actions are not imposed by a punishing God. They are the result of a loving Higher Power who grants us total creative freedom and allows us to feel and learn from the natural results of our choices – good or bad. This is the way in which we grow spiritually, mentally, and emotionally in Narcotics Anonymous. 15
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In the moment: the good news is we don't have to suffer. When we say we must do “this” to attain “that” it is merely that we may accept or reject any suggestion intended to help us avoid the pain of repeating our previous mistakes. 21
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**“Something inside us said, 'no more.' we had begun to have
silent thoughts that maybe the dope was killing us.”** 1
-grey book page 3, line 30 2
3

Many of us used for years and did not realize we had a problem. Even when we became 4
aware that something was wrong, most of us could not accept we were addicts. Just as 5
recovery is a process, and not a single event, so too was this realization. Seeds began to 6
germinate and this allowed recovery to become possible. 7

We may have realized drugs were shortening our lives, but we had no desire to stop 8
using. Perhaps some of us thought that one day we would have an epiphany, get religion, 9
or just grow up and make a decision to change. Deep down, we may have already known 10
we lacked the power to do so, even if we hadn't quite admitted it to ourselves on a con- 11
scious level. 12

Many of us continued using long after we realized we had lost control, or that we were 13
slowly dying or risking overdose. Some of us were fully aware that we were addicts and 14
still continued to use. 15

The reasons we continued to use may be as varied as each individual addict. Some of 16
us knew we were addicts but saw our lives as manageable, only vaguely aware that our 17
using might be the cause of our problems. Others knew their lives lacked even a passing 18
resemblance to manageability. Some of us knew our drug use was only a symptom of a 19
larger problem. We were unaware that the cause of our symptoms was a disease called 20
addiction. 21

No matter what, the process was that opened our minds to recovery we all came to the 22
same realization, we lacked the capability to stay clean. This realization actually made our 23
recovery possible. 24

*In the moment: through N.A., I have a choice. Having admitted that the drugs were killing 25
me, I can finally surrender to the N.A. Program. When I follow it to the best of my ability, I 26
can finally begin living!* 27

1 **“Grey book “not from preaching nor from judgement, but from**
2 **sharing our experience, strength and hope do we recover.”**
3 **Grey book, chapter five, page 83, lines 4-6quote”**

4 Meditation...when we did hear others share, we usually heard about their struggles, their
5 mistakes, and what they did to find a new way to live, free from guilt, shame, and active
6 addiction. When we got to Step Three, we were further relieved to learn that no one was
7 going to force their religion on us. In fact, the God of our own understanding did not
8 mean the God we grew up with, or the conception of God many of us had when we first
9 came in. And what a relief! Not too many of us came in with a very healthy conception of
10 a Higher Power, if we had one at all. As we progressed through Steps four and five our
11 sense of relief only increased as we learned we not only got to figure out our own sexual-
12 ity and our own moral code, but that no one was going to prescribe it for us. As long as
13 we were not hurting other people, it seemed we could be comfortable with who we were
14 and confident in who we were becoming as we formed our values and realized what they
15 were. Some of us made decisions to give up old behaviors, while others realized things
16 they had judged themselves mercilessly for in the past were the result of shame, and
17 having someone else's moral code forced on us. We may have had both experiences, or
18 even run the gamut on a single issue as our recovery progressed and evolved. What an
19 undeniable feeling of freedom to realize that, maybe for the first time in our lives, we were
20 becoming capable of making adult decisions and defining who we were, with the help of
21 a loving Higher Power.

22 *In the moment: I will not preach the N.A. Program, nor will I judge other people or moral-*
23 *ize with my fellow addicts. I will share my own personal struggles and what I did to find a*
24 *new way to live in happiness...clean! I will be grateful for the gift of choice and, through*
25 *sharing my experience, strength and hope, make this same gift available to others.*

“As we become more closely involved with others we will learn to share our pain and it will lessen.” 1
-grey book, chapter four, Step Twelve, page 68, lines 33-34 2
3

Many of us come to N.A. very guarded. In our old way of life vulnerability equated to weakness, and weakness, to our sick way of thinking, equated to death. Many of our fears were well founded. After all, in our active addiction, being vulnerable opened us up to the predatory behaviors of others in active addiction. The few times we allowed ourselves to open up, we got burned. Whether our dealer was a respectable doctor prescribing us our drugs-of-no-choice or we literally lived on the street, many of us lived by the code of the street: we must show no weakness in order to survive. 4
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In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Our inability to be vulnerable was keeping us sick. Refusing to admit our weakness was, in fact, killing us. 11
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In recovery we learn to open ourselves up to those who truly want to help us. We learn, first hand, that "the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel". We learn to trust, and we learn to be trusted. We may even learn that people in N.A. are sick; just like we are. On the rare occasions someone 13
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Violates that trust, we learn it is not fatal. We may even feel a certain sense of empathy toward the offender, for we know too well what it is like to be in that sick state of mind. We can even be grateful in such situations for the opportunity to practice the principles of our Traditions. 17
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In the moment: I will have faith in someone in N.A. who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery. My thoughts will be on people who are not using and who have found a new way to live. I will share my pain and my recovery with these new associations. I will embrace the gift of vulnerability, realizing I truly have nothing to fear. 21
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1 **“At the end of our using, we were consumed with terror and**
2 **despair. We knew for sure that we were dying and many of our**
3 **friends were already dead. No one can explain the incredible**
4 **fact that addicts, hopeless in their addiction, can reach for and**
5 **receive help in Narcotics Anonymous.”**
6 **Grey book pg. 136 lines 21-26**

7 It's a little talked about part of our addiction. We who knew it all, and could do anything
8 in our own insane thinking, were reduced to a level of existence that was little more than
9 just surviving. We were so good at masking what was really happening, by convincing
10 ourselves that we were still in control. Deep down though, we did in fact know that we
11 were killing ourselves, but would hide this from ourselves, by consuming more drugs,
12 and diving even deeper into the despair. It's a cycle that cannot be broken by will power
13 alone. How many times had we tried to change early on, by telling ourselves, that after
14 this time thing would be different, or that's it, I'm finished, no more? Only to repeat the
15 same actions and drug use that brought us to that point in the first place. It does seem
16 an impossible task after many years of repeating these same failures over and over. After
17 a while, we succumb to the fact that we are forever doomed. Dying from our addiction
18 becomes a stark reality that many of us welcome after years and years of suffering. This
19 is a reminder to us that we are truly blessed to be alive today. The miracle happens for a
20 sick and suffering addict when they reach out to the N.A. Program for help, and for the
21 first time are able to break the vicious cycle of addiction, that would surely lead to death.
22 N.A. offers us life instead.

23 *In the moment: we will be a part of living instead of dying. We will be, to the best of our*
24 *ability, participants in the blessing of this new life, by keeping on the right path. We will*
25 *be available to other addicts needing help, and remind them, that they do have a choice*
26 *today, if they reach out for help, they can choose to live.*

**"As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those
that would tear us apart, all will be well."
Gray book pg 87 header 2nd paragraph**

Addiction makes us one of a kind, fortunately there are a lot of us. The disease of addiction is what draw us together, but it's recovery in Narcotics Anonymous that keeps us together. The principles in N.A. Is the glue that forms this bond, our common purpose is what brings us together, it makes unity possible. The disease of addiction is what will tear us apart, a recovering addict by themselves is bad company. We keep what we have by sharing it with other suffering addicts, this is our primary purpose. Unity of purpose is what creates unity in action. Addicts individually working the Steps, Traditions, and having a relationship with the God of their own understanding is what keeps the disease from tearing those ties apart. That's why unity is a must, if we are to survive. No individual is more important than the group, and no group is more important than Narcotics Anonymous. Anonymity in the First Tradition makes it impossible for personalities to come before principles. That means that the needs of the group comes before our individual needs, or fears. What's good for the group is usually good for the individual. The meetings is where recovery happens for us, we are drawn together from all walks of life. The Traditions are the safeguards to keep us feeling safe and where we feel like we fit in. That unity depends on how well we follow our Traditions. We practice these principles in dealing with each other and with society at large. This prevents internal and external forces from disuniting us. This makes our recovery possible and the primary purpose to stay primary.

In the moment: we will not put our individual fears and needs ahead of the group, we need the group to survive.

1 **"If the word God bothers you, as it did many of us in the begin-**
2 **ning, substitute recovery, good, love, N.A. , peace or anything**
3 **positive, just as long as you mean it."**
4 **Gray book pg 38 lines 7-9**

5 As using addicts many of us cried out to God through fox hole prayers, we called out
6 to God when we were running out of drugs, or caught by the police. Some of us never
7 believed in God at all. When some of us came to Narcotics Anonymous we had trouble
8 accepting God as an entity.

9 Some of us suffered guilt from the things we did in active addiction, that the mention of
10 God frightened or shamed us, so we rejected God. Some of us had God shoved down
11 our throats as children so we were closed minded at first. The First Step assures us that
12 we're not God, and to stay clean and recover we would need a power greater than our-
13 selves, and it wasn't us, for recovery to work. This power that we needed to tap into, in our
14 Second Step, removed our obsession to use drugs, and helped us with our thinking. This
15 power didn't have to be God as religion understood it. We used the group collectively,
16 we chose to follow the principles of Narcotics Anonymous. We chose whatever power we
17 wanted, as long as it was loving, caring, forgiving, and outside ourselves. The Second
18 Step reminded us that the process of coming to believe, is what restores us to sanity. So,
19 it's the actions we do is what restores us. Going to meetings, doing service in a group,
20 reading literature, and taking suggestions from our sponsors. These actions are a power
21 greater than ourselves and can relieve our obsession to use drugs and helps us with our
22 thinking. We have to be honest with our belief for it to work.

23 G-ood, o-rderly, d-irection seems to work for some us. For others it was the G-ift, o-f, d-es-
24 peration. Whatever it is we have to mean it.

25 *In the moment: we will choose a God of our own understanding, we will be honest with*
26 *that belief, by doing the action.*

**"An addict who does not want to stop using will not stop using.
They can be...beaten, locked up or whatever; but they won't stop
using until they want to."
Gray book pg 97 lines 18-22**

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Our Third Tradition tells us that desire is the basis of our recovery. Without the desire to stop using we are doomed. When we first arrived to Narcotics Anonymous we just wanted to stop hurting, most of us were sick and tired of being tired and sick. Some of us came in through the direction of the law enforcement, and some of us were directed by our families, or jobs. Either way, after a while, if we weren't here for ourselves we didn't stay. The pain for us had to reach a point, that we're willing to surrender, first to the disease, that means we had to accept we had a disease, and then we had to surrender to the solution, Narcotics Anonymous. In the past addicts were put in jail hoping they would stop using, it didn't work, as soon as the addict was released, they returned to using again. Addicts were given medication in hope that the addict would lose the desire to use drugs. Some addicts were told to try religion, in hope they would find God, and stop using drugs. None of these methods worked for us. What worked for us was an honest desire, originating in our hearts not our minds to stop using. Our hopelessness is what brings us to Narcotics Anonymous. Hope is what keeps us here. Narcotics Anonymous was the last house on the block. That desire had to turn to desperation for us to first come here, and then to stay. We had to be completely beaten by our own spirits, for us to submit. When we finally surrendered, we were willing to try a different way. Finally, we found a new way to live, a life we never ever could had conceived of. Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous.

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In the moment: we will keep our doors open, jft we will fan the flames of desire for the suffering addict coming in.

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1 **"All too many times, doctors who meant well, but did not know of**
2 **our disease, enabled our addictions"**
3 **Gray book pg 10 lines 13-14**

4 Some say that the most dangerous place for an addict to be in, is not in the club or the
5 bar. The most dangerous place for an addict to be in, is in a doctor's office. Ironic as that
6 sounds, it's been proven over and over that a number of our members returned to active
7 addiction after receiving medication from doctors. Addiction is a physical, mental, spiri-
8 tual and emotional disease. Trained professionals learned about medicine and diseases,
9 but addiction is mostly a spiritual disease that affects us physically and mentally. Today's
10 doctor's still have very little knowledge about addiction, a ten hour course cannot make
11 anyone an expert. We in Narcotics Anonymous who have recovered from this state of
12 hopelessness, are experts in our recovery. We spent years and years in active addiction,
13 so we have plenty of experience in the disease also. Our experience shows that a spiri-
14 tual malady needs a spiritual solution. We can't treat a spiritual disease with chemicals.
15 Although doctors mean well, they actually contribute more to the problem than the solu-
16 tion. Related facilities and treatment centers often treat only the symptom of the disease,
17 which is the use of drugs. Their cure is abstinence, and more recently partial abstinence.
18 We can't use drugs to get off drugs, and we can't treat our spirits if our bodies and minds
19 are still clouded with drugs. Narcotics Anonymous has been proving itself for decades, as
20 the best treatment for the disease of addiction. Our program offers more than just absti-
21 nence, it offers a spiritual awakening with every Step. The relationship with others and our
22 Higher Power proves to be our greatest blessings.

23 *In the moment: we respect and trust the medical field with our health issues, but our dis-*
24 *ease of addiction we trust the Narcotics Anonymous program.*

**"Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we
were actually creating our own problems"
Gray book pg. 23 header first paragraph**

First we used drugs, then drugs use us. What started out as fun, we thought, and recreation ended up being all we thought about. As our disease progressed, it became a priority in our lives. Getting drugs and using drugs came before our families, it came before our jobs, and soon enough it came before us. Our whole life was centered in drugs. As we used to live and live to use, our personal responsibilities were neglected. Our unmanageability was apparent to those around us, it seems that we were the last ones to know that we could have a problem. Our days consisted of constant squabbles with our love ones, some of us became unemployed, and some of us were incarcerated. Using drugs isolated us from our families, friends, our jobs, and finally ourselves. Drugs that was once our solution, became a problem for us. The drugs stop working. What once filled our void in our souls, was actually making our void even bigger. We thought if we could just stop using drugs, our lives would get better. We replaced our void with new jobs, new lovers, religion and other drugs. We moved to different areas thinking that our feelings and emotions would change. Our inner unmanageability became more and more apparent, nothing we tried worked. Sooner or later we returned to the only thing that once worked for us, our drugs. Beaten into submission we found Narcotics Anonymous, here we met folks just like us. The people we met in Narcotics Anonymous like us, suffered the horrors of addiction. They seemed to be happy, joyous and free, they seemed to have the answer from freedom from active addiction. They shared with us, that if we weren't the problem there would be no solution. We started feel hope that we also can recover.

In the moment: we know that although we're not responsible for our disease, we are responsible to recover.

**We were using in a manner which seemed to be social or at least
controllable with little indication of the disaster which the future
held for us. Grey book pg. 13 lines 18-20**

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As practicing addicts, we were used to the hurdles, and consequences that addiction brought upon us. The losing that we had become so accustomed to, was as much a part of life as anything. What we did was convince ourselves that the consequences would not outweigh fulfilling the desire to use. With this mindset, we were ready and willing to take any negative effects from our using.

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How does someone with this thinking ever overcome the desire to use? The usual cause and effect of taking jan action, and then suffering from the aftermath was not and never will be enough to stop an addict. After all, how many times did loved ones threaten to take some action if we did not change. Such as a spouse threatening to leave, or a parent kicking us out on the street as a direct result of our using. We never dreamed that this is how things would end up for us.

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Those early days of using that brought us acceptance with others that were doing it, and the "good times" we thought we had. Of course, the consequences may not have been as severe early on, and most addicts would agree that at that time in their addiction, we would have scoffed at someone suggesting that this is how we would end up. Controlled by the addiction and completely surrendered to it as well. Hindsight is 20 20 vision, and knowing now what disaster our lives became brings a light on this disease, and reminds us just how powerful and cunning it is.

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In the moment: we will reflect on our lives, and how we can better relay the message of recovery to the newcomers, who may not see what disasters lie ahead of them without change, and without the help of the N.A. Program.

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1 **"The Eight Step is a mighty stride away from a lie dominated by**
2 **guilt and remorse"**
3 **Gray book pg. 51 lines 14-16**

4 If God forgives us in the Seventh Step, then we have to forgive ourselves, because we're
5 not greater than God. The Eight Step provides this process, looking at our Fourth Step
6 list is a start. At this point our list usually doubles, because after doing a personal inven-
7 tory we saw our exact nature of our wrongs and patterns. We were no longer victims; our
8 Eight Step reveals that we put ourselves in a position to be harmed by others. Defending
9 ourselves we harmed others, we were still at fault for being there. The lifestyles we lived
10 in active addiction affected us at a deep level, we warped our personalities. No matter
11 how much damage we caused others, we hurt ourselves the most at a deep level. The
12 guilt and remorse caused self-hatred, so we used more drugs not to feel. The Eight Step
13 provides a way out, but we must change our old ways. Steps 4, 5, and 6 forced us to look
14 at ourselves, the results were, that we gained self- acceptance. Where before we didn't
15 have a choice, we have one now. Our spirits awoke as a result of the prior Steps, we were
16 given the tools to negotiate the next Step. In Step Seven our hearts began to recover and
17 we received courage from our Higher Power along with spiritual tools. God had forgiven
18 us, so we had to forgive ourselves and others. This was a giant Step from the way we use
19 to live.

20 We developed compassion as a result, we were able to finally see our part and sought to
21 correct it. We made the list and became willing, we now are actually preparing to be will-
22 ing to look for the people we had harmed. This is a mighty stride from the way we use to
23 live., and we can't do it alone. We need our sponsor's guidance and support and God's
24 power and spirit.

25 *In the moment: we begin the process of forgiveness by God forgiving us, we are forgiving*
26 *us, and us forgiving people when they don't forgive us.*

"We do, however, remember that God, not us, is responsible for our change. The line between where God does or does not help us is absolutely irrelevant." 1
Gray book pg. 56 lines 17-19 2
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Ego tells us that ego doesn't exist, easing God out leaves us with ourselves alone with our disease. The disease speaks to us in a voice that we don't talk back to, our own. Sometimes we don't know who's talking, sometimes we don't know that we don't know. Anonymity also means that we don't take credit for our recovery. Our gray book says, "all glory to God as we understand him is our attitude here." 5
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This state of humility is what we need to interact with others. It is our actions not our feelings that define our recovery. Our Step Ten helps us keep this balance, we take inventory throughout the day to avoid some of our pitfalls. We engage our brains before our mouths, or any other form of communicating with others. 10
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We run down our check list. Are we hungry, angry, lonely, tired, are we taking ourselves too serious, we can count to ten, wait ten seconds, or dismiss the first ten thoughts that come to mind, before we interact. We take time to allow the privilege of thinking before acting or reacting. These tools prevent us from having 14
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To apply the corrective part of Step Ten. We recall our 6th and 7th Step and see where the God of our understanding had forgiven us. We reaffirm our divine partnership with our Higher Power, humility sets in, we become more tolerant and patient with others. Our Steps are designed to keep us from slipping back to our old behaviors and attitudes. It prevents us from creating and recreating more wreckage in our lives. The more we apply the spiritual principles the less we practice our defects. We stop justifying, rationalizing, and analyzing. We replace compliance with reliance and let our loving God guide us. 18
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In the moment: we'll remember that sometimes we don't see the fine line between God's will and ours's. We'll practice surrender. 25
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***“Through the freedom in our new lives we are finally able to see
the special qualities that we possess as individuals...”*** 1
Gray Book pg 161 Lines 2-4 2
3

In Narcotics Anonymous one of the people we will meet, will be ourselves. After hitting our 4
bottoms, we weren't too happy to see what we have become. Now Abstinent, we feel all 5
our feelings, and most were guilt, shame, and remorse. Most of us didn't like ourselves, 6
and now we get to face it. Living with ourselves without the use of drugs was even more 7
painful, we no longer had the drugs to numb us. N.A. does not only offer Abstinence from 8
drugs, it also offers Freedom from the obsession to use, and it offers a New Way to Live 9
through the Spiritual Awakening we experience from Living each Step. This Awakening of 10
the Spirit allows us to nurture the person we were meant to be all along. This Process is 11
over time and not overnight, and at times our pain requires Total Surrender. 12

There's Freedom contained in each Spiritual Principle. Freedom from active addiction, 13
Freedom from self, Freedom from others, and Freedom from the world at large. We no 14
longer need the masks, we no longer had to be the people others wanted us to be. We 15
finally could be ourselves and be okay with that. We're a work in Progress. We're still not 16
the person God knows we could be. We're still not the person we want to be. We're the 17
person we are supposed to be right here, right now. With the Help of the God Of Our 18
Understanding, our Sponsors, the Steps, and the Fellowship of N.A. this transformation is 19
possible, Just For Today. We see ourselves realistically, with our liabilities and our Assets. 20
We Surrender to this Process and receive Self-Acceptance, and Acceptance of others. 21
We learn to Live in our own skins, we get glimpses of the people we could one day be. 22
Today there's Hope. 23

*In the moment; We don't only have Self-Acceptance, but we also Accept what we are 24
lacking, we also develop Compassion for ourselves and others.* 25

1 **“Being self-supporting is an important part of our new way of**
2 **life. For the individual, this is usually quite a change.” Grey book**
3 **pg. 106 lines 14-16**

4 Many years of finding ways and means to get more leads us down many different paths
5 when we were using. For some of us who may have been fortunate enough to have
6 enough money to continue a habit uninterrupted by the stumbling; that doing without has
7 brought so many of us. We are used to getting what we want, when we want it. This is
8 the cornerstone of a drug addict. The instant gratification that we found with our drugs
9 is a direct result of living life by this philosophy. Of course, being an addict means that
10 this behavior will take precedence over all other aspects of life. We eventually don't care
11 about family, loved ones, jobs, friends, children, or society. We are only concerned with
12 getting what we want, and in our case, was more drugs. This usually leaves most of us
13 in a state that makes us feel entitled. This means that if we cannot possibly support this
14 type of lifestyle, then we will find others who will help facilitate this life for us. Whether it's
15 our parents, or a spouse, we look for people that will help contribute to our destruction a
16 bag at a time, or a pill at a time. After all, if someone close to us tries to get in our way, we
17 generally don't want that person around us. Life already makes it very difficult to continue
18 in the manner of an active addict, and we certainly wouldn't want to add to the dilemma
19 by placing ourselves around people that will also make it difficult for us to use. Being self-
20 supporting in recovery is only brought about by a complete turnaround in our attitudes
21 and our thinking. We no longer feel entitled to, and we no longer feel that the world owes
22 us. This new way of life encourages us to take an active part in life today. And now that
23 we have the tools and the support of addicts in the program, we can carry on without
24 looking to the world to carry us instead.

25 *In the moment: we can be reassured that as long as we continue in the N.A. way of life,*
26 *that we never have to be a burden to our loved ones and society as a whole:*

“Step One means that we don’t have to make excuses for the way we are, and that is a great freedom. Surrender means not having to fight anymore.”gray book pg. 31 lines 30-32 1
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Part of learning how to live free from addiction means that we must learn to face ourselves, and be content and accepting of who we truly are. Without the drugs to mask our feelings anymore, facing life, and being alone with ourselves is a reality that we cannot afford to take lightly. Step One is a big help in learning how to accept ourselves for who we are. 4
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Learning to apply the spiritual principle of surrender can only be brought about by regular contact with ourselves through sharing with other addicts, and writing. This enables us to keep a vigilant watch on what’s really going on with us. We are making our first steps towards this when we can admit that we are powerless over addiction, but learning what this means in a practical sense also means that we must learn to overcome the habits that we lived with for so long that were a direct result of not admitting being powerless over much at all. We hardly would ever consider being powerless as even an option to try and change the dilemma that addiction has brought us to. Today we are learning to accept that it is ok to be powerless, as long as we are willing to do what it takes to continue in the Steps to find the Greater Power for good that helps addicts like us to obtain a new life free from addiction. As we do the footwork in this new direction, we are able to be who we are without excuses. We can be proud to be an addict in recovery. 9
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In the moment: we will admit that we are powerless over our addiction. We can learn to do the next right thing, so that regardless of what life has in store for us today, we can accept and face who we are without having to hide from ourselves, and others. 21
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**" Success was scary and unfamiliar"
gray book pg. 25 line 2**

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As our usage progressed our focus was in finding ways and the means to keep using. 3
 Our families took a back seat, we failed in our jobs and our ambitions, if any, dwindled. 4
 Our dreams and aspirations gave way to our drugs and that lifestyle. We kept using 5
 despite the wreckage, our denial grew and we accept our demise. We had no success 6
 in life and the drugs turned against us, so we couldn't even use successfully. We sought 7
 help or were mandated for help in the areas of jails, psychiatry, religion and medication. 8
 All these methods failed for us, ours was a spiritual problem, not a medical our moral 9
 one. Arriving to Narcotics Anonymous we were told that each day we didn't use was a 10
 success. Finally, with the help of N.A. And the Fellowship, we felt that we also can have a 11
 successful day. Our fears were still dominating our thoughts and feelings; we were wait- 12
 ing for the other shoe to drop off. Our doomsday feelings slowly changed as we found 13
 a power greater than ourselves in the Second Step. We had a choice, we didn't have to 14
 use, if we turned our wills and lives over to the care of this Higher Power in the Third Step. 15
 With each Step our spirit awakened, we were participating in our own lives. We got better 16
 with the things around us, and we started to grow. We changed from hopeless people to 17
 hopeful members of N.A. And society as a whole. With each day that comes our hope is 18
 renewed, success for us, means that we don't have to use just for today, it means that we 19
 have a relationship with our me found friends in N.A. We're grateful that we could have 20
 a loving relationship with our friends, families. We no longer view the world as a hostile 21
 environment. We become employable and/or self-supporting. We start to care for others. 22
 We do recover and surrender to the God of our understanding. 23

*In the moment: we are a success in our own right. Each day that we don't use, we are a
 success.*

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**"When we take the action indicated in the Steps, the result is
 healing of our distorted personalities"
 Gray book pg. 142 lines 16-18**

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For lots of us, drugs were the solution, we used drugs to masks our feelings. The drugs helped us to survive our emotions. As we progressed in our addiction, we no longer were using drugs, the drugs were using us. The more we used, the more we had to use, it was no longer a choice, the drugs were in control. We lost our relationship with reality, our spirits went to sleep with each use. We had to use at all cost, despite the evidence of the wreckage we were creating. We failed to see the harm we were causing to others, more than that we failed to see the harm that we were causing ourselves. Our literature says that we caused people great harm, but most of all we harmed ourselves. Our character defects that were needed to keep using, was actually causing harm to us at a deep level. We're no longer the people we set out to be, the drugs and lifestyle twisted our emotions and personalities at a deep level. The disease gained more and more territory, and who we really were began to disappear. Arriving at the door Step of Narcotics Anonymous we met a special group of people who like us visited the horrors of addiction. Today they were free, they shared with us a solution that was spiritual in nature. Through their freedom we gained hope, we felt if they can do it, we could do it. First there needs to be a demotion process, out with the old, in with the new. We no longer needed those old survival skills, we found they were useless in this new way of life. Working with a sponsor, and a power greater than ourselves, we use the Steps to for this transformation. Each and every Step resulted in the awakening of our spirits. We do recover from a hopeless state, together we build our new personalities with the spiritual principles of N.A.

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In the moment: we can heal from the inside out, we surrender to many possibilities. We are free.

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1 **"Whenever a situation arises for us to admit our powerlessness,**
2 **we first look for ways to exert power against it. Exhausting these**
3 **ways, we begin sharing with others and find hope"**
4 **Gray book pg. 128 lines 12-15**

5 Our literature says that, "we have never seen a person relapse who lives the Narcotics
6 Anonymous program". However, our greatest stumbling blocks come from ourselves.
7 When we admit our powerlessness over our addiction in the First Step, we have to take
8 into account that others around us, may not have.

9 Expectations of ourselves and others could have a bearing on our serenity. We will try
10 countless times to exert control over others, or the outcomes of certain situations. After
11 beating our heads against a wall we surrender. The reality is that, though, we in Narcotics
12 Anonymous, suffer from the same disease, we suffer at different levels of the disease and
13 recovery. The people outside the program may not be aware of any principles at all, them-
14 selves. In this matter we are powerless, but our Higher Power does have the power, if we
15 ask. We ask for patience, tolerance, and compassion, for ourselves as well as others. We
16 share

17 Our expectations and disappointments, and yes in that order, with others. We find that we
18 might have been unrealistic in our thinking. We strive for adequacy and not perfection.
19 Being wrong keeps us humble, because we have to ask for help. We are reminded that
20 we are not really doing this by ourselves. Anonymity means that we don't take credit for
21 our recovery. We are on this journey with the God of our understanding, and others in and
22 out of the Fellowship. We find hope when others share with us, their experience. Once
23 again we confirm that we're not unique, and we're not alone. We once again feel whole,
24 and part of a whole. The "s" in h.a.l.t.s., don't take yourself too seriously becomes a reality.

25 *In the moment: we will try surrender first, we do God's will for us, then we turn it over for*
26 *the results*

**“Medicine, religion and psychiatry seemed to have no answers
 for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us,
 in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics
 Anonymous.”** 1
Grey book pg. 23 from “why are we here” 5

Many of us have been down the road of medication, religion or psychiatry. It is only fitting 6
 that such a desperate state of existence would warrant looking for a way out of our pre- 7
 dicament. How easy is it for an addict to go to a doctor and get medication, since we are 8
 spiritually, mentally, and physically bankrupt, we really don't have to “fake” being insane? 9
 Doctors have proven time and again to be more than willing to give the prescriptions that 10
 we seek, in order to treat the symptom instead of the underlying problem of addiction. We 11
 are prone to try anything in order to get that quick fix to our dilemma, and any road that 12
 promises little or no work, or pain on our part is what we are after. Addicts seek rewards 13
 without the labor. Religion may promise us a “miracle” cure for our disease, and we may 14
 even go down that road only to find disappointment and despair. God must not work we 15
 think, or at least he doesn't work the way we want him to because that “miracle cure” 16
 seems to elude us, and leave us worse off than when we started. If we find ourselves on 17
 the prescriptions from the doctor, we have already found that the psychiatrist may have 18
 some good ideas in theory, but again, we seem to be the exception to the textbook expla- 19
 nations. Where does this leave a sick and suffering addict? Usually, by this time this will 20
 leave us at that point of desperation, where we have nothing else to lose but to try another 21
 way. Hopefully, we find N.A. and surrender that our way, and the ways that the world have 22
 to cure us just simply didn't work. 23

*In the moment: we will be grateful that we have made it here in the rooms of N.A., and we 24
 can carry this message to other sick and suffering addicts, that we have the answer to 25
 addiction. 26*

“It will not make better persons to judge the faults of another. The thing that will make us better is to clean up our lives by relieving ourselves of guilt.”

Gray Book, p. 51 Lines 12-14 Step Eight

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By the time we reach the Eight Step, we should have put away our blame throwers. In our addiction, we put ourselves in situations to be hurt by others. We also, through our defects, have managed to bring out the worst in people, our families, and employers. We were told that although we are not responsible for our disease, we are accountable for our Recovery. In our Seventh Step, we learned that God has Forgiven us, and since we’re not greater than God, we learn to Forgive ourselves. This will also enable us to become Willing to Forgive others, especially if we’re not Forgiven by them. In this Step we achieve Freedom from the past guilt that trapped us. We become Willing to make a list of people, places and things that we brought harm to. Almost anything or anyone we came in contact with, during our addiction, was a victim. Our Literature says that we also hurt ourselves in the process. The harms we caused others could’ve been minor or major. The harms were physical, mental, Spiritual and emotional.

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We began to look at our side of the street. As we wrote, our anger and resentments seemed to melt away. We began to build Awareness and gain new Perspectives about ourselves and others. We experience a deeper level of the Promise of Freedom. We Share our Amends list with our Sponsor. They will show us except where to do so, would injure them or others.

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In the moment; We will clean up our side of the street. We will also, in time, learn to Forgive those that we think, real or imagined, harmed us.

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**"We have found that trying to help another addict is good for us
 whether the addict we try to help uses what we have to offer or
 not"** 1
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 3
Gray book pg. 19 lines 27-29 4

Our Step Twelve and our Fifth Tradition, tells us that we carry the message to the addict 5
 who still suffers. An addict that is still using, most of the time, is not going to want what 6
 we have to offer. Our basic text tells us that that they can be reasoned with, prayed over, 7
 threatened, beaten, or locked up, but they will not stop until they want to. What we do is 8
 carry the message that saved our lives, and hopefully that will fan the flames of desire for 9
 that suffering addict. Carrying our message and helping others, reinforces our program, 10
 and we get to stay clean another day. We don't get to choose who we carry the message 11
 to, we carry the message and God delivers it. We are seed planters jimmy k use to say. 12
 We don't know the season that the seed will grow. We carry the message without any 13
 rewards or expectations. Sometimes God will put people in our lives without our choos- 14
 ing or permission, we may not even want to work with that person, but they keep calling 15
 us and want something from us. It is not always convenient, or even pleasurable for us 16
 to work with certain people. Guess what, maybe it was God's will for them, for us to be 17
 there. It's not about us, it's about God's will for us, or God's will for that person. We are 18
 strictly instruments and vessels that the Higher Power uses to help others, that's our main 19
 purpose, to stay clean and carry the N.A. message of recovery. 20

Working with others seems to work also as an anecdote to disease thinking. With each 21
 Spiritual awakening, we keep the disease from claiming footage in our lives. It's a we 22
 program. 23

*In the moment: we carry the message and God delivers it, we don't choose who we 24
 deliver it to, we just deliver.* 25

1 **"We examine in depth our relationships with people, places and**
2 **situations asking ourselves what we have demanded of these**
3 **relationships"**
4 **Gray book pg. 42 lines 26-28**

5 Most of the time when we think about the Fourth Step, we think of our relationships with
6 people.

7 People are definitely, if not the majority part of our Fourth Step. We also have to inventory
8 our relationship with places, and things. Some of the places we might want to include
9 are, churches, schools, military, hospitals, and any other community structures and ser-
10 vices. Have we acted out toward these places? Did we forge paper work to get services
11 we didn't need, or qualify for? Have we stolen property from anyone of these places, or
12 cause structural or any other kind of damage? Things that we might owe amends to can
13 also be in forms of ideas. Have we created resentments with religious beliefs? Have we
14 rebelled against society and therefore became a menace? Although some of these harms
15 seem invisible to the eyes of those things, it did have an effect on our thinking, attitudes,
16 and behaviors. Our literature tells us that most of all we harmed ourselves. In our active
17 addiction, we demanded to be served or catered to, by services that are really a privi-
18 lege, rather than s right to have. Having the privilege to obtain a driver's license seems to
19 be a common example of this right to entitlement, when it's really a privilege. Resenting
20 places because we were not hired or got fired by the establishment. Many of us held
21 resentments against colleges and the military, and spoke against these places, when ask
22 what we thought about them. One of our greatest resentments seems to be with God, this
23 affected us the most. We need a Higher Power to recover, and if we don't establish a rela-
24 tionship with one, we are surely doomed. We must go deep in our search, because that's
25 where the problem lays.

26 *In the moment: we will with the help of our sponsors, N.A. And God, will go in depth in our*
27 *inventories.*

"The Fellowship, after a meeting, is a good opportunity to share things we didn't get to discuss at the meeting" 1
Gray book pg. 148 lines 14-15 2
3

"Come early, stay late" was one of the slogans we first heard. It was suggested that we join the 20/20 club. That meant to come twenty minutes before the meeting starts, and stay twenty minutes after the meeting ends. How about those late night meetings at the diner, till the wee hours in the morning? As we think back to our beginnings, we can recall, that they were some of the most revealing moments in our recovery. We got to discuss some of the high points of the meeting, sometimes we asked questions about things we didn't understand. Some of us even got the opportunity to choose a sponsor, as we saw how some members interacted in public. Some of us were embarrassed, because another member offered to buy us food. We didn't want to admit we didn't have money. We shared jokes and were able to laugh at ourselves. Sometimes there were functions and N.A. Events that forced us to socialize with one another, without the safety and structure of the meeting. These were opportunities for us to get out of isolation, and learn how to interact with each other, without the use of drugs. We were accepted by those who like us, experienced the same thing, when they were new. We felt welcome, we felt, perhaps, for the first time, unconditional love. The members that have been around before us, didn't want anything from us, and that felt strange. We began to feel the we of the program, the Fellowship part. Our walls began to fall, we began to feel accepted, we began to feel loved. In Narcotics Anonymous we'll love you, until you learn to love yourself. Our diversity gives us the opportunity to come in contact with people, that we wouldn't necessarily had got high with. For the first time in a long time, we don't feel alone.

In the moment: we will attend the meeting before and after the meeting, and become part of the whole 24
25

1 **"We take the Fourth Step to gain the necessary strength and**
2 **insight to enable us to grow in this new way of life"**
3 **Gray book pgs. 40-41 lines 29-1**

4 *For many us taking the Fourth Step was frightening, we feared what we might find*
5 *out about ourselves. This Step mentions a fearless inventory, not fearful one. That was*
6 *the purpose of the first three Steps, to gain faith that our Higher Power we met in those*
7 *Steps would be with us now, and guide us in this endeavor. The word moral confused*
8 *many of us, we thought surely there'll be nothing moral about our characters in our using*
9 *past. This is not a question of us being good or bad, it's a question of behavior patterns*
10 *that no longer are useful in this way of life, they have served their purpose in our past.*
11 *There are also qualities of us that we wish to enhance, because no one of us is all good,*
12 *or all bad. Like the grocer our literature mentions, separating the rotten fruit from the good*
13 *fruit, and throwing out the bad fruit. Our bad fruits were the result of unspiritual principles*
14 *we needed for active addiction. They were our survival skills, and many of them saved*
15 *our lives, for that moment. In Narcotics Anonymous we are doing more than existing and*
16 *surviving. We are finally living a life beyond our wildest dreams. Part of this process is us*
17 *looking at ourselves with a recovery mirror. We look at ourselves with compassion and*
18 *understanding. We learn how to separate ourselves from our diseased self. We start to*
19 *become accountable in this Step, we look at our side of the street and pick up the broom.*
20 *We write our resentments, our fears and misconduct. We write how these defects affected*
21 *us and those around us. We write about the time before we used drugs, and about the*
22 *people we were and would've become, if it weren't for the progression of the disease. We*
23 *start to awaken to a life filled with new possibilities.*

24 *In the moment: we will view the Fourth Step as an act of love, not an act of fear.*

"It is not shameful to relapse. The real shame is in not coming back" gray book pg. 130 Lines 32-33

1
2

Relapse is not part of recovery, it's a lack of it. Our literature tells us that relapse is never an accident, but it is a reality, and it does happen. Relapse is a result of not working our program, or being complacent after long periods of abstinence. Our basic text says, if we remain complacent for long, the recovery process ceases. By not working the program, we are actually reserving a place for the relapse process to begin. At any given day we are walking toward a drug or away from it. It's our actions that determines whether we are arresting our disease, or arresting our recovery. We suffer from a fatal, progressive disease, from which there is no known cure. Our literature also says that, "we have never seen a person relapse who lives the Narcotics Anonymous program. The last thing we do in the relapse process is use drugs. We can actually safeguard against the relapse process by recognizing its beginning. Spiritually we stop asking our Higher Power for guidance and strength. We stop praying and meditating as much. We begin to dislike the humans around us. We begin to lose patience and tolerance in our everyday activities. We then start reacting instead of acting, meanwhile our meeting attendance lessens. We start disliking ourselves and operate on our own self-will, our hope starts to leave us, and we question our powerlessness. The point is, we start using without realizing how we got there again. Some of us are lucky to return, some of us die in active addiction. Our literature says that we should return as soon as possible, otherwise we can be gone beyond recall. Our egos tell us we should be ashamed and we would be criticized or judged if we come back. Those of us that are lucky enough to come back, show a courage that's not of own.

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In the moment: we will continue in the recovery process, we will stay, so we don't have to come back.

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1 **"Our experience is that those who begin sharing innermost**
2 **feelings, emotions and thoughts with other recovering addicts,**
3 **rather than giving a drug history, tend to make more rapid**
4 **growth"**
5 **Gray book pg. 68 Lines 18-21**

6 Learn to listen, listen to learn, that was a slogan that we use to hear, when we first came
7 in. That basically meant to stay quiet and listen, or we heard, to take the cotton out of your
8 ears, and put it in your mouth, that was another way of saying to stay quiet and listen. It
9 was suggested to identify and not compare with people's stories. Narcotics Anonymous
10 is a recovery program, not a drug program, our main problem is the disease of addiction.
11 Drugs were just the symptom; it was just ten percent of the real problem. The tip of the
12 iceberg as some would say. So our solution has to be a deep resolution, take away the
13 drugs and you still have untreated addiction. We share our innermost selves about our
14 feelings, emotions and thoughts, fears and our hopes. This allows the process of iden-
15 tification and empathy to begin with others. This is of therapeutic value, we see the the
16 up and down nods of other members, and it's not the drugs, lol. This approval is a form
17 of acceptance; we feel at home. For the first time in a long time we are part of something
18 whole. Our spirits are moved and we begin to awake, this happens at a subconscious
19 level. We tap into a power greater than ourselves and our obsessions about using are
20 removed, or at least subside. Either way we lose the desire to use, and find a new way of
21 life without the use of drugs. We experience our message, and this is what we share. We
22 share the message not the mess. That's one of the strange paradoxes in our program, we
23 have to give what was freely given to us, to keep it. We now know that our pain is used as
24 a Stepping stone to our spirituality.

25 *In the moment: we share the ten percent for identification purposes, we share the hope*
26 *for recovery purposes.*

"In our addictions, we were dependent on people, places and things. We looked to them to support us and to supply the things we found lacking in ourselves"
Gray book pg. 106 lines 16-18

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As using addicts most of us were very selfish and self-centered, we looked for ways to continue our usage. We weren't self-supporting when we used, we stole from others to support our habits, we robbed people of their time and needs. Some things were irreplaceable. We did many people great harms; we were always looking for handouts. Even though we were isolated, the disease affected those around us. In Narcotics Anonymous we learn to stand on our own two feet, first as a group, as a fellowship, and finally on our own. Our Steps and Traditions teach us to contribute and help others, in turn we help ourselves. As a fellowship, we are no longer a strain on society. As individuals, we become productive members of that society. We become givers and not takers, our actions are our amends. We not only resolute and restore our past transgressions, we also resolve them. We live a different way today, we regard others first, then we regard ourselves. We are finally self-supporting through our own contributions. As a fellowship being self-supporting means, we are no longer using people, places and things. We are under no one's and other's control, because we're not asking for anything from them. Our motives stem from love and compassion. We are part of something whole, our apathy becomes empathy as we identify with others. We become part of the solution in all matters. We give of our selves without reward or recognition. Most importantly we don't take credit for it. Our spiritual foundation of anonymity becomes our goal and way of life. We now give of what we have in order to keep it. Addiction is a contradiction to living. Recovery in Narcotics Anonymous we practice to live and let live.

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In the moment: we will depend on our Higher Power to supply us with everything we need.

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**"All too many times, doctors who meant well, but did not know of
 our disease, enabled our addictions"
 Gray book pg. 10 lines 13-14**

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Step One reminds us that we've tried countless other remedies-psychiatrists, hospitals, recovery houses...everything we tried, failed. Ours's is a spiritual disease, since you can't treat a spiritual disease with medicine, doctors can't help us with our recovery. In fact, one of the most dangerous places for us to visit, is a doctor's office. Today's doctors take a ten-hour course in the disease of addiction. We on the other hand have years of experience in the disease, and now we also have years of experience in the solution. We are experts in our own recovery. Since addiction is a spiritual problem, our solution must be of a spiritual nature. The twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous are spiritually based, they are our solution to the torturous existence in active addiction. For some us, Narcotics Anonymous was the last thing we tried, and the first thing that worked. This was the last house on the block for most of us. Abstinence from all drugs in order to recover is the cornerstone of our program, it's part of our message. Clean time is what we celebrate in our N.A. Anniversaries, recovery can't be easily measured. We arrest the disease and recovery is then possible. Ours is a daily reprieve, and that depends on our spiritual maintenance. Our literature tells us that we must abstain from all drugs in order to recover. We cannot recover if our minds and bodies are clouded with drugs. Substituting one drug for another, releases our addiction all over again. Our recovery is our responsibility not our doctors. Although we have no opinions on outside issues, clean time in Narcotics Anonymous is an inside issue. We respect professionals and what they do, and our Traditions protect us in what we do.

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In the moment: we're responsible for our own recovery, we leave medicine to the doctors and recovery to Narcotics Anonymous.

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"Step Four helps us see exactly what our problems are and shows us our strengths" 1
Gray book pg. 40 lines 12-13 2
 3

We addicts are negative by nature, this is a result of our self-destructive wills in action. 4
 We lived in the disease, our actions were a high-risk act, with no safety net. When we fell, 5
 we fell hard. Living in this insanity leaves no hope for solutions. We became alienated and 6
 demoralized. When we took the Fourth Step, we were asked to take a fearless and moral 7
 inventory. Many of us thought, "there's nothing moral about my inventory"! We reviewed 8
 our first three Steps with our sponsors, we prayed and meditated to our Higher Power. 9
 The results were that our faith helped us separate ourselves from the disease. We did 10
 have morals and values that were instilled in us, when we were children. We were born 11
 with the purity of spirit; our quest now is to see how and why our spirits closed and even- 12
 tually went to sleep. We face, trace, erase, replace and embrace in our recovery process. 13
 The self-appraisal in the Fourth Step is the erase process. Step One we face it, Step 14
 Two and three we trace it. Step Four erase, Steps five through seven we replace it. Nine 15
 through twelve we embrace it. Each Step cannot work without the other, and none cannot 16
 work without the God of our understanding and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. 17
 The defects were our survival skills in active addiction, they are no longer effective in our 18
 new way of life. Pretty much like that grocer who separates the rotten fruit from the good 19
 fruit, we to separate what's useless in our new lives. Step Four shows us our assets, so 20
 we can develop them and use them to improve the quality of our relationships with God, 21
 ourselves and others. Remove and replace is our task. We gain this courage and faith 22
 from the previous Steps. The Fourth Step is the most loving thing we can do for ourselves. 23

*In the moment: we will look at the fruits of this Step, then we will apply the tools to get the 24
 fruit.* 25

1 **"We became very dependent on people to carry us emotionally**
2 **though life. We were always left disappointed and hurt when they**
3 **had other interest, other friends and loved ones".**
4 **Gray book pg. 2 lines 12-15**

5 Most addicts cannot hit bottom as long as the enablers keep enabling the addict to use.
6 Just like the pirate who carefully and patiently builds the model of a ship inside a bottle,
7 we addict carefully and overtime build our lives inside addiction. At the end of the road,
8 we were stuck, we couldn't get out. Our greatest enablers, families, employers, friends
9 and landlords, began to be affected by our addiction. Our families loved us, but began to
10 show tough love. Many of us were disowned and fired by our enablers. The people closes
11 to us can no longer bear to watch our demise. Our romantic partners wanted some-
12 one different as a partner, so they left us. Jobs that we were so loyal to, throughout our
13 employment, were now finding other employees to replace us. We couldn't help feeling
14 betrayed, especially at our greatest time of need. We were emotionally and spiritually
15 bankrupt and our denial was so thick, that we couldn't understand why they were doing
16 this to us. We didn't realize that we were sick and we were doing this to ourselves. We
17 became hopeless and in desperation we sought help from Narcotics Anonymous. After
18 arriving to N.A. We were told that we suffered from a disease and not a moral dilemma.
19 We were told that although we weren't responsible for having this disease, we were
20 accountable for our actions, and responsible for our recovery. Learning to live through
21 spiritual principles we can now see the damage and wreckage we caused while we were
22 using. Our resentments against our enablers, turned to gratitude, we saw the value in
23 their actions. Working the Steps, we are transformed to different people. We start to build
24 our ships outside our addiction.

25 *In the moment: we will be grateful for the people who didn't enable us, and make*
26 *amends.*

1 **"The idea of a spiritual awakening takes many different forms in**
2 **the many different personalities we find in the Fellowship"**
3 **Gray book pg. 59 lines 1-3**

4 Active addiction smothered the spirit we were born with, using drugs time after time
5 forced our spirits to go to sleep. What we needed was an awakening of the spirit. Our
6 Step Twelve in Narcotics Anonymous states that this awakening happens as a result these
7 Steps. The first thing we needed to do was to stop putting drugs in our bodies and minds.
8 The pain of living without drugs, forces us to seek a power greater than ourselves, than
9 can relieve our obsession to use. This was the first introduction of spirituality to our spirits,
10 it was our first shake, to our sleeping spirits. It was the beginning of our spiritual awak-
11 ening. This process starts from the First Step on, we don't have to wait till Step Twelve
12 for this experience. We awaken a little more every time we take another Step. It can be
13 different for each one of us. For some us, freedom from active addiction is an awakening
14 in of its self. For some of us, our awakening began when our obsession to use drugs was
15 lifted. Some of us had a spiritual experience when we tapped into a power greater than
16 ourselves for the first time. Some of began to notice the end of isolation and felt this was
17 an awakening also. Some members started to get their basic needs met, for the first time
18 in a long time. We started to regain the trust from those we know, including our families or
19 employers. Whatever the form of this awakening, the common theme is that, " life takes
20 on a new meaning, a new joy, and a quality of being and feeling worthwhile. We become
21 spiritually refreshed and are glad to be alive". A spiritual awakening can be progressive,
22 but we have to keep moving forward. Without being an active member in N.A. Our spirits
23 can go back to sleep.

24 *In the moment: we will be grateful for each awakening we receive from each Step, and*
25 *share this gift with others.*

1 **“Being self-supporting is an important part of our new way of**
2 **life. For the individual, this is usually quite a change.”**
3 **Grey book pg. 106 lines 14-16**

4 Many years of finding ways and means to get more leads us down many different paths
5 when we were using. For some of us who may have been fortunate enough to have
6 enough money to continue a habit uninterrupted by the stumbling that doing without has
7 brought so many of us. We are used to getting what we want, when we want it. This is
8 the cornerstone of a drug addict. The instant gratification that we found with our drugs
9 is a direct result of living life by this philosophy. Of course, being an addict means that
10 this behavior will take precedence over all other aspects of life. We eventually don't care
11 about family, loved ones, jobs, friends, children, or society. We are only concerned with
12 getting what we want, and in our case was more drugs. This usually leaves most of us
13 in a state that makes us feel entitled. This means that if we cannot possibly support this
14 type of lifestyle, then we will find others who will help facilitate this life for us. Whether it's
15 our parents, or a spouse, we look for people that will help contribute to our destruction a
16 bag at a time, or a pill at a time. After all, if someone close to us tries to get in our way, we
17 generally don't want that person around us. Life already makes it very difficult to continue
18 in the manner of an active addict, and we certainly wouldn't want to add to the dilemma
19 by placing ourselves around people that will also make it difficult for us to use. Being
20 self-supporting in recovery is only brought about by a complete turnaround in our atti-
21 tudes and our thinking. We no longer feel entitled to, and we no longer feel that the world
22 owes us. This new way of life encourages us to take an active part in life today. And now
23 that we have the tools and the support of addicts in the program, we can carry on without
24 looking to the world to carry us instead.

25 *In the moment: we can be reassured that as long as we continue in the N.A. way of life,*
26 *that we never have to be a burden to our loved ones and society as a whole:*

1 ***“Many of us cling to our fears, doubts, and self-loathing or hatred***
2 ***of others, because there is a certain distorted security in familiar***
3 ***pain. It seems safer to hold on to the old familiar pain than to let***
4 ***go of it for the unknown.”***
5 ***Gray Book pg 46 Lines 22-26***

6 Some members describe Step Six as a grieving process. Character defects were the
7 tools for the disease. Like drugs, they were our solution for a long time. Toward the end
8 of our bottoms, they turned against us. The drugs and defects that went hand in hand
9 with our active addiction, were no longer needed in this New Way Of Life. We had to
10 say goodbye to those old survival skills. Since that’s all we were familiar with, it was diffi-
11 cult and painful to let go. But like our Gray Book states, “Letting go of character defects
12 should be done with love. Fear and hate cannot give us new lives. We should approach
13 old defects with patience and understanding, for they have served us well in days past.”
14 We must be careful not to take ourselves so serious in this process. The Spiritual Principle
15 of Willingness prepares us here. We have to let the God Of Our Own Understanding
16 remove these defects or at least minimize them. God only removes what we really want
17 Him to remove. This is why letting go of these defects must be done with our permission.
18 We decide the ones that are causing us and others the most pain. Those are the ones
19 we must become entirely ready to have them removed. We can start with our selfish-
20 ness. Our Basic Text tells us that this defect has to be intolerable to us. It goes on to say
21 that it becomes a destructive chain that ties us to our bad habits. As we practice these
22 Spiritual Principles, we begin to replace the old with the new. These old tools don’t work in
23 this New Way To Live. We start to see glimpses of the people we could become, without
24 some of these defects. Our fear of the unknown is lessened if not dissipated. Our Faith
25 increases the more we Practice these Spiritual Principles.

26 *In the moment; For a long time our vision of our New Life gives us Hope. This Hope*
27 *increases our Willingness.*

1 **“Being self supporting is an important part of our new way of**
2 **life. For the individual, this is usually quite a change.”**
3 **Grey book pg. 106 lines 14-16**

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22 owes us. This new way of life encourages us to take an active part in life today. And now
23 that we have the tools and the support of addicts in the program, we can carry on without
24 looking to the world to carry us instead.

25 *In the moment: we can be reassured that as long as we continue in the N.A. way of life,*
26 *that we never have to be a burden to our loved ones and society as a whole:*

1 **“By following these principles in our dealings with others in N.A.**
2 **and society at large, we avoid many problems”**
3 **Grey book pg. 89 lines 25-27**

4 In order to become the productive member of society again, as our literature promises us,
5 we need to continually follow the path of spiritual principles. By keeping our recovery first
6 in our lives, over time, we are able to carry what we learn here in N.A. out into the outside
7 world. As we share in meetings, and listen to others share, we can hear the solutions
8 as well as the problems that addicts have as we slowly integrate back into society in a
9 healthy way. We can learn through our meetings what to do in certain situations, also what
10 not to do. If we follow the positive messages that we hear, we will learn that they all share
11 one common denominator. They all follow spiritual principles. The obvious ones such as
12 honesty, open mindedness, and willingness, but also the ones such as giving, kindness,
13 and empathy for others. We learn that these principles keep our own egos in check, also
14 help to guide us through any difficult situation that may arise in our life. The moment we
15 abandon these principles laid out in the N.A. Program is when we find ourselves in trou-
16 ble, and it's usually our own doing. Our ability to make decisions with the help of others in
17 N.A. will help us to avoid some of these problems, but we also develop the ability to learn
18 from our mistakes today. We are no longer doomed to repeat the same mistakes over and
19 over as we were while we were using. Problems we encounter today, are only temporary
20 setbacks as long as we utilize the tools we are given, and continually ask for guidance
21 from God and others.

22 *In the moment: today we can move past a problem by admitting to another addict that we*
23 *need help and guidance. Today we don't have all the answers, but we can find the solu-*
24 *tions.*

1 ***“It seems that being powerless is a huge stumbling block.***
2 ***Whenever a situation arises for us to admit our powerlessness,***
3 ***we first look for ways to exert power against it?”***
4 ***Grey book pg. 128 lines 11-14***

5 Fighting against the disease of addiction has taken up most of our lives. We were on the
6 path of destruction, at the hands of a spiritual disease that had full control over us. Just
7 breaking that grip of despair is a miracle in and of itself. That took some divine interven-
8 tion from a loving God. This doesn't mean that we are cured however, and the sooner we
9 accept and believe that we are truly powerless over the disease of addiction, the sooner
10 we can begin to feel the benefits of the program of N.A. When we are bombarded by
11 life's challenges we too can have a hard time. Situations, and problems of either our own
12 making, or of circumstances beyond us will occur. When we face life's challenges today,
13 we must first keep our ego's in check, by reminding ourselves that we are addicts, and
14 we don't control everything. We learn to take a Step back and meditate on this before we
15 take actions today. Finding out what we do have the ability to change today about our-
16 selves, and our situations is what we pray for in our serenity prayer. Knowing when to ask
17 for help is one of our greatest tools, and we do these things before we take action. Our
18 first instinct as addicts is to look for the easy way out of problems. We don't like to do the
19 work and we don't like change. Over time, we experience enough setbacks, and pain to
20 tell us that our way just doesn't work, and is almost guaranteed to bring us more pain, and
21 misery. When we feel that we've wasted too much of our precious life and want to show
22 gratitude for being alive and free today, we try something different and welcome these
23 positive changes.

24 *In the moment: today we will stop looking for the easy way out, and instead take the nec-*
25 *essary Steps towards the solution using the principles we learn from the N.A. Program.*

1 **“We remember our part in the divine partnership with God and**
2 **we are more tolerant and patient with other people.”**
3 **Grey book pg. 56 lines 28-30**

4 When a group of addicts get together for the purpose of recovery from addiction, we are
5 practicing one of the greatest tools we have in defense of the disease. We no longer are
6 alone and have become a part of a greater fellowship through the N.A. Program. Meeting
7 others at meetings and learning to fellowship with them gives us a mutual solution, to
8 a mutual problem of addiction. We all suffered from this disease in one form or another
9 and have found each other because of the N.A. Program. As we begin to stop being that
10 angry frightened loner, and allow others into our lives, we begin to feel the benefits of
11 living an honest, clean life. This can be frightening for an addict who never wanted to be
12 honest with anyone, and practiced deception, and isolation. We also, as we stay clean
13 learn that we are responsible for our part in our recovery. Working a daily maintenance
14 program, and putting in the footwork to do the work, however, we are not responsible for
15 the results. God takes care of the rest; our literature reminds us. We learn over time, that
16 if we take one Step towards God in our recovery, he takes 2 Steps towards us, and we
17 see doors opening in our life, that would otherwise never reveal themselves. The greatest
18 defense against the disease is honest sharing with others and allowing the healing power
19 of empathy to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves. A group of recovering
20 addicts have a great power when we work together for a common cause of recovering
21 from the disease of addiction and helping a newcomer. We can put our personalities, and
22 personal agendas aside, and allow the healing power of God to work through us. Passing
23 along what we have been given through N.A., to the still suffering addict is one of the
24 greatest gifts and assures that we will not only keep what we have, but that we will gain
25 the spiritual benefits that we so desperately need in order to grow.

26 *In the moment: today we remember to do our part in our own recovery and look to the*
27 *God of our understanding and others in the program to help us.*

***“Our way of living speaks for itself better than our words ever
could. People see us on the street and remember us as furtive,
frightened loners. They notice the grayness and fear leaving our
faces. They see us gradually come alive.”
Grey book pg. 59 lines 28-31***

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When we first get clean, we will find that our family and friends, and those around us may be skeptical at first of our new-found recovery. After many years of “messing up” our lives, and destroying our relationships, this is normal. We must remember that we are here for ourselves first and cannot get clean for anyone else but ourselves. If we continue to focus our energy, and actions on our own lives, and recovering from the disease of addiction, we eventually adopt a new attitude on life and are better able to have meaningful relationships with others. Our new attitudes, and actions speak for themselves over time. We are here for the purpose of recovery, and to help the newcomer. The principles we learn here not only helps to equip us better to carry the message to the still suffering addict, but it also helps us to repair our broken lives. We are a living example of the program of N.A. The literature tells us that our actions speak louder than our words when it comes to helping a newcomer. We mustn't forget how we all have a unique ability to pick out all the negative and look for the excuses to leave. Preaching doesn't work on the newcomer. We keep to sharing our experience, strength, and hope, and apply these principles in all our affairs, to be an attractive to new members of the program, and to our family and loved ones. We have come a long way from that “frightened loner” that we were when we first got here. Today as our spirits awaken we find a new place in the world, and society.

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In the moment: today we are grateful for the new life that the N.A. Program has given us, and make ourselves available for the newcomer to give away what was freely given to us

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1 **“Many of us felt that our lives, due to petty frustrations, minor set-**
2 **backs and losses, were not getting any better”**
3 **Grey book pg. 26 lines 18-20**

4 We as addicts are easily discouraged when things seem to not be going our way. We
5 tend to always want the answers, and results that we are looking for without the wait, or
6 without putting in the footwork. As we stay clean and start to learn how to deal with life
7 clean, and drug free, we quickly realize that this is not how things work. Anything worth
8 working for, is worth the wait. After years of using drugs, to achieve that instant gratifica-
9 tion that the drugs gave us, this is a totally new idea for most of us. We are given another
10 chance through the N.A. Program, which means through the Steps, we are given the
11 ability to put the necessary work in and allow God to do the rest. We are rewarded each
12 day with another day clean, and another chance to live. Unfortunately, many of us get
13 impatient with life. We see many addicts get bitter and angry still when things don't go
14 their way. This is a result of a lack of surrender, and the inability to let go of the reigns. We
15 do not control the outcome in life, and we don't control others. The sooner we can admit
16 this and surrender our control, the sooner we are able to obtain the relief that so many of
17 us experience. We find ourselves looking for solutions for our problems today, and when
18 we feel frustrated, and angry, we usually need to take an inventory, and take a look at our-
19 selves, rather than blaming others. Overall, we can feel good about being clean, and as
20 our literature tells us, we are generally doing better than we feel. Through N.A., we learn
21 acceptance, and patience, and are able to live through any setback life may throw at us
22 without using.

23 *In the moment: today we will work through our daily problems, and setbacks through the*
24 *tools the N.A. Program offers us, and with the help of others.*

**“When we could not stand our old ways no longer, we began to
change. All that was required is that we try”** 1
Grey book pg. 32 lines 27-29 2
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How many years of pain and suffering addicts go through before they will start to look for 4
another way. Many of us find ourselves spending more time looking for a way to success- 5
fully use, without all the problems that using has brought us in the past. Unfortunately, this 6
doesn't work. After making every change that we could try, which includes changing geo- 7
graphical locations, friends, spouses, drugs, and so on, we realize that the same problem 8
exists. When we realize that we are the problem, we can begin to work on the solution. If 9
we are lucky enough to make it to N.A., all we need to do is look around at all the other 10
addicts there who are clean to realize that there is a solution to our dilemma. If we have 11
had enough pain and suffering, and find ourselves in an N.A. meeting, then we are in the 12
best position to succeed. Even after we stay clean for a while, we are still left with all the 13
issues that we have carried around with us for years, but stuffed them deep down inside 14
through constant denial, and drug use. Once the onion peels of denial begin to be pulled 15
away, we realize how much work there is to do. The pain and confusion that our “old 16
ways” of living cause us, gives us the motivation to do the necessary work on ourselves. 17
Through working with others, and a sponsor in N.A., we are able to work through these 18
problems together. If we honestly try, and are consistent in our seeking of recovery, we 19
will notice a change for the better in our actions, and reactions to life. Recovery puts us in 20
a position in life to continually get better and improve ourselves. Today we welcome any 21
change that helps us to keep moving forward in life, and to keep moving away from our 22
past ways. 23

*In the moment: today we want to keep moving forward in our recovery, and will do this 24
through daily work on ourselves, and keeping our recovery first in our lives* 25

1 **”Continuing to take personal inventory means that we form a**
2 **habit of looking at ourselves, our actions, our attitudes, and our**
3 **relationships on a regular basis”.**
4 **Grey book pg. 57 lines 14-17**

5 Keeping a personal inventory of our daily actions, motivations, and feelings is one tool
6 that we as addicts utilize to keep the addiction at bay. Since the addiction has made
7 its way into every area of our lives, it takes quite a bit of change, and time to be able to
8 weed it out of all our behaviors. We start off our changing by tackling the obvious things,
9 like using, steeling, and other things that may have ended us up in jails or institutions.
10 This only brings the problem of addiction to the surface and puts us in a position where
11 we need to either change or die. We are people of advantages, and disadvantages. We
12 have each other as our eyes and ears, because we have a real difficult time seeing the
13 things about ourselves that need changing, and even when we do, we have a tendency
14 to rationalize, and justify instead of accepting them. The “we” part of the N.A. Program
15 has many benefits and helping each other to make real change in our lives is only one of
16 them. Since we are never truly “cured” of this disease, we will find ourselves struggling
17 with some of the old character traits, such as selfishness and ego. We mustn’t lose faith
18 at these times, as our literature tells us. We are only human, and mustn’t put those per-
19 fect expectations on ourselves, or we are only setting ourselves up for failure. Keeping
20 in constant contact with other recovering addicts and building on our relationships in the
21 Fellowship is a great asset to any addict seeking recovery. Recovery is a journey out of
22 the pits of despair, and as any worthwhile journey it will have its pitfalls, and struggles. By
23 staying clean, we choose to live, and continue on that journey instead of falling back into
24 the chains of addiction.

25 *In the moment: today we can keep taking a daily inventory of our actions and reactions.*
26 *We ask God to help us to have the courage to change the things we can today*

***”Although our heads told us we would never make it, the people
 in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we could”:
 Grey book pg. 25 lines 29-31*** 1
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One of the things we will hear when we get here is to not think too much. When we start 4
 spending time alone in our heads we are giving the disease a forum to attack us. An 5
 addict alone is in bad company. Addicts need to be around other addicts in order to feel 6
 part of but also to help us to fend off the “stinking thinking”. Hearing our literature for the 7
 first time or attending one of our N.A. meetings for the first time can be an eye-opening 8
 experience. All our lives we probably thought that we were the only ones that felt the way 9
 we do, we felt that. We were alone. Once we get to N.A., we realize that we are not alone, 10
 but we share a common disease, that isolates us all individually, and keeps us that way 11
 as long as we keep using. The lie that we are different is shattered over time, when we 12
 listen to others share at our meetings, and we can for the first time begin to feel like we 13
 are a part of the human race again. It is important to keep focused on our similarities, 14
 not our differences so that we can experience this change. The proof we get from seeing 15
 other addicts that have stayed clean and recovering for lengths of time is sometimes all 16
 we need to help us through another day. The hope that this gives us is what we hold onto. 17
 This is all part of the recovery from addiction process, and somehow God sees fit to bring 18
 us together in order to help each other. A group of people that alone are powerless and 19
 isolated, yet together are able to do together what individually we could not. Keeping this 20
 in mind as we attend our meetings, and fellowship with others in N.A. will give us a per- 21
 spective on the power of this program. 22

*In the moment: today we will reach out to others in the program to put our minds on the 23
 right track today, and to help others who may need help 24*

**“However, open mindedness without willingness, will get us
nowhere”
Grey book pg. 66 lines 14-15**

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Our literature tells us that honesty, open mindedness, and willingness are spiritual principles that get us out of the troubles that dishonesty, closed mindedness and unwillingness got us into. Continuing to live our lives with a closed mind is a sure way to not recover from this disease and will almost guarantee us that we will not make it here. In order to live everyday free from the addiction, we continually work on these principles. We never know when life will throw us a curve ball and must keep ourselves spiritually fit in order to meet the challenges that we can face in a day, and not revert back to our old ways, or worse yet, run back to a drug. It takes quite a bit of practice in order to learn how to face ourselves today, and our true natures. We do this by being honest with ourselves and others about what we are really feeling. This can be done at our meetings, or one on one with other recovering addicts. We follow the path that has been traveled down before us by others in the program. Our past will also come back to haunt us occasionally and must remain honest in order to face our past, and our present in a constructive way. Running from ourselves doesn't help us today and can lead to relapse. We no longer have the drugs to run to in order to hide from our feelings, and our guilt, so we learn to face ourselves as honestly as we can. We can incorporate the help of the program, and other recovering addicts in order to help us sort through what we're going through. We also utilize the tools of reading, writing, and praying to keep us in touch with ourselves, and to lead us down a journey to find ourselves each day. Together we learn how to live a new life that we can only achieve if we keep our minds open to new ideas and are willing to do what it takes in order to recover.

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In the moment: today we can honestly face ourselves, so we can accept ourselves for where we are. We can work on our shortcomings, and faults by first being honest about who we are.

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1 **"We will eventually hear someone who flat out makes us feel**
2 **lucky by comparison. We will grow to know gratitude, to see**
3 **where we came from and how far we have progressed"**
4 **Grey book pg. 19 lines 17-20**

5 Being an addict in recovery by no means makes us perfect human beings. Our self- cen-
6 tered thinking is a natural behavior for an addict, and recovery is only a daily reprieve
7 from this way of life. Thinking of ourselves above, or better than others was a trademark
8 behavior of our addiction, but today this way of thinking has no place in our lives. This is
9 also true of our self-willed behaviors as well. We still want what we want, when we want it,
10 and to go against this natural instinct is just as much of a miracle as it is for us not to use
11 drugs. Comparing ourselves to others while we were using, and also during our recovery
12 is another symptom of the disease of addiction. We always want to feel better than others,
13 so comparing what others are doing to ourselves can be a dangerous behavior. We are
14 to only worry about our own recovery, as we cannot recover for anyone else. No one of
15 us makes consistently good decisions for ourselves in this program, we need each other
16 to help us with this, and this action is based on our Third Step. Learning to let go of the
17 controls and ask for direction can steer us away from making bad decisions in our lives
18 that can bring us pain, and maybe even relapse. When we grab the controls for too long,
19 eventually our own selfish motives come into play, and we will ultimately start to act on
20 these motives. The self-gratifying behaviors will sicken us, and eventually can lead to our
21 picking up. Today, as part of our program we practice turning over the controls to a loving
22 God, and to others, and together we our given the strength to find the peace that comes
23 with letting go.

24 *In the moment: we can be grateful today for all the gifts the N.A. Program has given us,*
25 *and keep a positive outlook on a life clean, and free from addiction.*

**“Most addicts have strong feelings about their Higher Power
 and vigorously defend their right to their own understanding of
 Higher Power. The strength to move into action comes from our
 Higher Power.”** 1
Gray Book p. 37 Lines 2-5 2
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Our Literature tells us that a belief in a Higher Power is necessary to achieve any sort of 6
 ongoing Recovery. We were forced to seek this Higher Power as a Solution for our obses- 7
 sion to use. After achieving Complete and Total Abstinence in the First Step, we needed a 8
 Power Greater Than Ourselves to stay Clean and Recover. This Process of Recovery can- 9
 not only work with knowledge and belief. Willingness must be transferred into Action for 10
 our Surrender to have any kind of effect. In Narcotics Anonymous we have the Freedom 11
 to choose the Higher Power Of Our Own Understanding. It’s suggested that this Power 12
 be Loving, Caring and Greater than ourselves. Because we first come in with a lot of guilt 13
 and shame, some members add Forgiving to this list. Our Third Step tells us that if we are 14
 to Grow Spiritually, it’s necessary to be Honest about our belief. The Action that creates 15
 Faith springs from the Hope that’s evident all around us as we attend meetings. Our sanity 16
 progresses as we seek a conscious contact with this Power. This relationship with our 17
 Higher Power Grows as we practice the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous. We 18
 share about our relationship with our Higher Power with those around us. We can share 19
 about our Higher Power in meetings, within the Guide Lines of our Traditions. We defend 20
 our right to a God Of Our Own Understanding. By the same token, we don’t endorse or 21
 call this Power by name at meetings. Narcotics Anonymous is a Spiritual Program, not 22
 a religious one. We can share through the Process of the Steps and Traditions how this 23
 Power manifested itself in our Lives. We can also see the evidence of other’s Higher 24
 Power working in their Lives. We need this Power to Practice these Spiritual Principles in 25
 our daily Lives. 26

*In the moment; We can share our Higher Power with new members until they find their 27
 own. Newcomers can use the Group as a Power Greater than themselves as well.* 28

1 ***“It was conceivable in our addictive thinking that something***
2 ***would work for us without any work on our part.”***
3 ***Gray Book pg 10 Lines 29-31***

4 One of the slogans we hear in Narcotics Anonymous is, “It works if you work it.” That
5 means if we want to Recover we have to take Action. In active addiction, we depended
6 on the drugs to make us feel good, and take away any physical, mental or emotional
7 pain. We used drugs to be able to live that day. The drugs did for us what we couldn’t
8 do for ourselves. Arriving to N.A. other members told us that we never had to use again.
9 We read in the N.A. book that if we Lived the Narcotics Anonymous Program on a daily
10 basis we wouldn’t use just for that day. Living the Program meant that we had to have a
11 desire to stop using. It meant that we had to embrace the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics
12 Anonymous. Our Surrender to Total and Complete Abstinence was one of the Spiritual
13 Principles we had to Surrender to. We had to stop letting drugs use us. We needed to
14 find a Power stronger than our addiction to help us get and stay Clean. Following the
15 suggestions through Action is what removed our obsession to use drugs. The pain of not
16 using drugs forced us to seek this Power Greater Than Ourselves. Making the Decision to
17 turn our thinking and our behaviors to the Care of this Higher Power required our Open-
18 mindedness and Willingness. We Applied the Spiritual Tools we were given to unlock the
19 Spiritual Fruits contained in each Step and Tradition. The results from our efforts had not
20 only been Freedom from active addiction. Through the results of those Steps we achieved
21 a Spiritual Awakening. Through our Spiritual Awakening we were capable of Practicing
22 these Spiritual Principles in all our affairs.

23 *In the moment; We will Live the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous by Sharing*
24 *this Message with those who still suffer.*

1 **“Reaching out is the beginning of the struggle that will make us**
2 **free. It will break down the walls that imprisons us.”**
3 **Gray Book pg. 130 Lines 23-25**

4 When we are using we protect ourselves by putting up barriers between us and the out-
5 side world. We fall into the illusion of self-sufficiency, believing that we can take care
6 of ourselves and do everything on our own. Many of us used to believe that we would
7 be better off without the help of anyone else in our lives. We rarely realize that we have
8 never been self-supporting as we continue leeching off of the resources of others. We
9 separated ourselves from anything that did not have to do with getting or using drugs.
10 Some would say that the exact nature of the disease of addiction is isolation. The proof
11 of this statement can be shown when addicts hit their bottoms, they’re usually alone. Our
12 using slowly eliminated the positive people, places and things from our lives. Our worlds
13 shrank as we used to live and lived to use. At the end of our using the desperation drove
14 us to seek help from others in Narcotics Anonymous. How it Works in our Gray Book tells
15 us that, “If what you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get
16 it, then you are ready to take certain steps.” These Principles are written so simply that
17 we can practice them in our daily lives. The Principle of Surrender can be measured by
18 the actions we take. Our Literature tells us that the antidote to our diseased thinking is
19 Honesty. A member once said that, “Honesty is aligning our actions to the Truth.” This
20 realignment helps us to Trust our fellow members and also build Integrity. Both of these
21 Spiritual Principles are essential to our ongoing Recovery. To help us practice these
22 Spiritual Principles, we need to tap into and rely on our Higher Power. We have been
23 developing a relationship with this Power that helped us achieve Complete and Total
24 Abstinence.

25 *In the moment; With Complete and Total Abstinence and practicing the Spiritual Principles*
26 *of the Steps and Traditions we are given a Daily Reprieve from our self-imposed life sen-*
27 *tences. We become Free to Live.*

1 **“The program works a miracle in our hearts...We become free to**
2 **move about without compulsion or guilt.”**
3 **Gray Book pg 18 Lines 23-26**

4 One of our members stated, “Steps Seven, Eight and Nine is when our Hearts start to
5 Recover.” They go on to explain that Love, Forgiveness and Kindness for others stem
6 from this part of our bodies. The beginning quote from our Gray Book states, “We become
7 new people. The Steps and abstinence gives us a daily reprieves from our self-imposed
8 life sentences.” For the Recovering addict in Narcotics Anonymous, these are miracles.
9 Before we can begin to Love and genuinely Care for others, we have to Care for our-
10 selves. Part of Recovery is about Self-Care. Steps Four, Five and Six are the Steps where
11 we start to get right with self. We begin with the inventory process and begin to eliminate
12 guilt and shame of self. We start the Self-Acceptance and Self-Care process, before we
13 can Accept and Care for others. Our Stomachs start to Recover, from here stems feelings
14 of oneself. Then our Hearts start to Recover, from here stems feelings for others. Our guilt,
15 shame and remorse transfers into Acceptance, Love, Patience and Understanding. We
16 start to walk with our heads held up high, and it’s not because of pride. We are Free to
17 be the people we were meant to be before we got sick. Were able to look at other people
18 in the eyes, because we are Free of guilt, shame and compulsion. Today we are capable
19 of feeling and showing Empathy for others. Our Hearts are Free to Love and Forgive, but
20 more importantly, to show Compassion. As we continue in the Steps we Recover from the
21 neck up, that’s where Meditation and Spirituality rests.

22 *In the moment; Through Living the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous our Hearts*
23 *are transformed. We become Loved and Loving people.*

1 **“Our negative sense of self was replaced by a positive concern**
2 **for others.”**
3 **Gray Book pg 26 Lines 26-27**

4 Our Basic Text tells us that our whole lives, one way or another, became centered in
5 drugs. It appeared that our personalities and who we were dissipated with each run. Like
6 tornadoes, we became self-centered, as we ripped through people's Lives. We were
7 harming ourselves the most by neglecting our own responsibilities. One of our members
8 stated that, “Addiction altered my behavior. Reality became uncomfortable, eventually
9 intolerable. I needed more and more drugs to survive. When I was under the influence
10 of drugs, Honesty and Integrity were less important and often inconvenient. Between
11 ‘runs’, Honesty and Integrity were burdens that would have prevented getting more
12 drugs and the relief I needed.” Lost and Spiritually broke we found ourselves in Narcotics
13 Anonymous. Here, we came in contact with others that were in the same place we were at
14 one time. These members of Narcotics Anonymous showed us unconditional Love. They
15 told us we didn't need to hurt anymore. They told us that they had found Freedom, from
16 the horrors of active addiction. Their hugs, along with the wordless language of Empathy,
17 became the beginning of our healing process. This New Way To Live became our New
18 Way Of Life. Freedom from active addiction gave us a sense of self. Our relationship with
19 reality was the start of our Recovery. The Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous
20 was the end of our isolation. We were given this Precious Gift freely. The only condition
21 to keep this Precious Gift was to give it away freely without charge. Through the results
22 of our Spiritual Awakening we developed a natural concern for others. We began to feel
23 Adequate and Worthy. Most importantly we were capable of Helping others.

24 *In the moment; The strange paradox of keeping what we have by giving it away, became*
25 *a normal Way Of Life for us.*

1 **“None of us stumbled into this Fellowship brimming with love,**
2 **honesty or open-minded willingness. We have all reached the**
3 **point where it seemed we could not longer continue because of**
4 **intense pain: physical, mental and spiritual!”**
5 **Gray Book pg 32 Lines 18-21**

6 Most members said that for them, Narcotics Anonymous was the last house on the block.
7 Some go on to say that they tried everything else first, but nothing worked, they contin-
8 ued to use. Some members said that Narcotics Anonymous was the last thing they tried,
9 but it was the first thing that worked. Our Literature states in Chapter Three, “...we tried
10 countless other remedies--counselors, psychiatrists, hospitals, lovers, new towns, new
11 jobs--everything we tried, failed.” Our Gray Book goes on to say, “We gave up--quit strug-
12 gling--surrendered, completely and unconditionally. Then, and only then did we begin
13 to recover from the disease of addiction.” Only with Total and Complete Surrender to
14 Narcotics Anonymous and its Spiritual Principles did we have a chance.

15 After coming into the N.A. Program, we realized that we were sick people. Unfortunately,
16 “If you take the drugs away from a drug-crazed maniac, you still have a maniac.” So most
17 of us arrive to N.A. with all our defects and bad habits. Our lack of Trust of others kept our
18 defenses up, and our minds closed. When the pain of staying the same became greater
19 than the pain of changing, we Surrendered again. Finally, an opening in our closed minds
20 was made, new ideas could be Accepted. Chapter Eight, We Do Recover says it best,
21 “That word-less language of recognition, belief and faith, which we call empathy, created
22 the atmosphere in which we could feel time, touch reality and recognize spiritual values
23 long lost to many of us.”

24 *In the moment; Practicing the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous can result in*
25 *us, brimming with Love, Honesty and Open-mindedness.*

“We don’t have to be clean when we get here, but after the first meeting, we suggest that you keep coming back to the meetings and coming clean.” 1
Gray Book pg 20 Lines 6-8 2
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Addiction is a progressive, fatal and incurable disease. Sounds pretty hopeless, right? 5
For many years, and for most of us, it was. After decades of suffering and dying of drug 6
use, addicts finally found a Solution. Narcotics Anonymous offers a daily reprieve from 7
the horrors of addiction. Narcotics Anonymous is for using addicts that have unsuccessful- 8
ly tried every other method to stop using. For most of us Narcotics Anonymous was the 9
last house on the block. Everything else we tried, religion, medication, psychiatry, drugs, 10
rehab and other institutions failed us. The cornerstone of our Program is Abstinence from 11
all drugs in order to Recover. This seems to be an impossible task at first. Fortunately, 12
the only requirement to start on our Journey is a desire to stop using. Once Total and 13
Complete Abstinence is reached, Recovery is then possible. We meet at a certain time 14
and place for the purpose of Recovery. We Help each other get Clean, stay Clean and 15
finally Recover, A Day At A Time. We are told; “Keep Coming Back”, even if we’re still 16
using. It’s suggested though that we come back clean. Although the only requirement is 17
the desire to stop using, it’s not okay to keep using. We will Welcome and Love you, but 18
we won’t enable you. Our Recovering members will lay down a clear path to Recover. It’s 19
up to the newcomer to take the necessary Actions to achieve and maintain Abstinence 20
while Recovery becomes possible. In Narcotics Anonymous we fan the Flames of Desire 21
by Sharing the Joy, we experience Freedom and Growth. We Recover by Practicing the 22
Spiritual Principles locked in the Steps and Traditions. When we Share these Spiritual 23
Tools with others, the Spiritual Fruits manifests in our Lives. The Evidence becomes clear 24
to others, and they want what we have found. This is the Attraction we have as we Carry 25
This Life Saving Message of Recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. 26

In the moment; We will Welcome all who come to N.A. We will Encourage Abstinence to 27
those still using. We will offer Recovery to those that are not using. 28

**“A warning about rationalization is that it has killed more of us
 than anything else. At times, our motives will be obscured by
 clouded thinking.”** 1
Gray Book pg 57 Lines 1-3 2
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Our Literature tells us, “What we knew about living when we got here had almost killed 5
 us.” Arriving to Narcotics Anonymous and seeing the mess we made of our lives only 6
 caused us to rationalize even more. We blamed the drugs to make sense of it all. In active 7
 addiction, we found ourselves defending our actions, constantly explaining ourselves. 8
 Many times we thought these explanations were what the other person wanted to hear. 9
 We justified our behaviors in order to protect our using. This quickly moved us into a 10
 pattern of lies and self-deception. This pattern became our lifestyle. We found ourselves 11
 immersed in a life of deceit and rationalization. After achieving Abstinence, we saw how 12
 sick we really were, especially without the drugs. These old defense mechanisms were 13
 the tools of the disease of addiction. These rationalizations served us well in active addic- 14
 tion. 15

In our Recovery, we learn to get Honest. We learn to face the Truth. With each Step we 16
 take and live, the onion gets peeled another layer. We help each other by becoming each 17
 other’s eyes and ears. Our Literature says, “We began to see that we had rationalized the 18
 most outrageous sort of nonsense...” This can still follow us in our Recovery. The Fruits of 19
 Living the Spiritual Principles releases us from denial. We Surrender our Wills and Lives 20
 to the Care of the God Of Our Understanding. We are no longer part of the problem, 21
 because we’re part of the Solution. 22

*In the moment; As we find ourselves Growing into mature consciousness, it becomes 23
 more uncomfortable to ration a lie. 24*

**“Faith is the key. It takes a firm belief in a loving God before we
can possibly begin to turn our wills and lives over to His care.”
Gray Book p. 139 Lines 25-27**

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Many of us came to Narcotics Anonymous with no experience of turning our Wills and our Lives over to the Care of a Loving, Caring God. We rarely have seen miracles that happened by just saying we had Faith. We talked about Belief, but truly didn't Believe. Our new-found Lives are based on actions that lead to Faith. We had trouble Accepting Life the way it was, and we Lived in a way that was rooted in fear. By working and Living the Steps we come in contact with a Higher Power in which we can Believe in. At first, it was difficult to believe in anything different from what we believed was the Truth. By working Step Two we opened ourselves to the possibility that something Greater Than Ourselves could restore us to sanity. Believing that there is a Loving Power and opening our minds to this possibility, our Trust and Faith will grow. Our Gray Book says, "...a spiritual experience is necessary to arrest our addiction." Working the Steps and Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous charts that course. Our First Spiritual experience starts when we Surrender to Total Abstinence. The pain of Living without drugs forces us to seek a Power Greater Than Ourselves. This Power relieves our obsession to use. This is the Beginning of our Spiritual Awakening. We begin to Trust this Power and its Guidance in our Daily Lives. Having only a Daily Reprieve from this fatal, progressive, incurable disease, we need to Recommit ourselves with a Daily Surrender. We wake up every morning by showing our Gratitude with a Prayer. We Pray for God's Will for us and the Power to carry it out. We do the next right thing for the right reason; we look at every situation throughout the day as an opportunity for growth. No matter what happens, we make time for meetings, call our Sponsors, help another suffering addict and Live the Spiritual Principles of Narcotics Anonymous. This is our safeguard against the relapse process. Each day with God's Help, our Spirits gain more territory against this deadly disease.

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In the moment; After some time doing things the N.A. Way, we begin to develop the Faith which leads to Trust that our Higher Power has much better plans for us, than we have for ourselves.

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1 **“The spiritual basis of the program is strong enough to support a**
2 **person with the disease.”**
3 **Gray Book p. 137 Lines 13-14**

4 Narcotics Anonymous is a Spiritual Program with a Spiritual Solution to a Spiritual
5 problem, the disease of addiction. We use Twelve Spiritually Based Steps and Twelve
6 Spiritually Based Traditions to treat this Spiritual malady. Our problem is not the drugs,
7 in fact; drugs for a short time were our solution to a hopeless state of existence. Drugs
8 made our suicide a slow process, slow enough that many of us got sick and tired of being
9 tired and sick. A Spiritual problem cannot be solved with chemicals. Our hopeless state
10 of desperation is what made our Recovery possible. Surrender is the Key that opens the
11 door up to Recovery. Once that door opens our Willingness and Action makes it possi-
12 ble to step through. Many of us tried other alternatives, religion, medicine, new lovers,
13 new towns and psychiatry. All these methods failing as a Solution, we finally came to
14 N.A. It was the last thing we tried, but it was the first thing that worked. While practicing
15 active addiction we were slowly committing suicide. Many times we tried to stop using on
16 our own, but no matter how many times, or what we tried, it failed. Many times we were
17 so hopeless that we thought there was no other option than to keep killing ourselves.
18 Our experience shows that The Spiritual Basis of the NA Program is strong enough to
19 support our Recovery. We have come to rely on a Power Greater Than Ourselves. For
20 the first time, Recovery from the disease of addiction was a Reality for us. In Narcotics
21 Anonymous, we keep this Precious Gift alive by Sharing it with all those who seek a
22 Solution from the disease of addiction. In Narcotics Anonymous, we keep this Precious
23 Gift alive by Sharing it with all those who seek a Solution from the disease of addiction.

24 *In the moment; We Live to Experience Life on God's Terms and Grow from this*
25 *Experience.*

***“Working the Steps will give us a relationship with a Power
greater than ourselves, correct old defects, right old wrongs, and
lead us to help others.”
Gray Book p. 19 Lines 3-6***

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Many of us ask ourselves, what does Recovery in Narcotics Anonymous mean to us?
Many of us would say that it saved our lives. Some would say that we stopped using
and hurting. Many would say that we got our families back. Some of us would say that
we became employable and were able to become financially successful. Some would
say that we finished school and became productive members of society. Although some
of these things are True, that’s not what our Recovery should be about, those are just
symptoms of staying Clean. Our Literature states that social acceptability does not equal
Recovery. Nothing ever seemed to fill the void/emptiness inside of us. In N.A., we learn to
Live a New Way. By working and Living the Steps, we allow ourselves the opportunity to
change and grow. For this, we need the Help of God As We Understood It, and the Help
of other addicts. By staying in contact with the Program, fellow addicts and our Higher
Power, we’re capable of a Transformation. We move from using, to getting Help for our-
selves and Helping others. We move from isolation to Fellowshiping, and from emptiness
to fulfillment.

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One of the most important aspects of Recovery is that our Spirits Awaken. We’re
able and capable of seeking and developing a Relationship with a God Of Our Own
Understanding. We’re able with the Help of the Steps, Traditions, the Fellowship, our
Sponsors, and our Higher Power to change from our old ways. We’re able and capable of
Amending the wreckage of the past. We find a New Way to Live without the use of drugs
and incorporate Spiritual Principles in our lives. We are then able to share this Precious
Gift with all those that seek it. Yes, our Recovery is more than just about us and material
gain. We find ourselves through the Process of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
Then we lose ourselves through Service and Helping others.

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*In the moment; We start to lose the stigma of the phrase “Once an addict, always an
addict.” We learn to Love ourselves and others. We Learn to Forgive ourselves and oth-
ers.*

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1 ***“There is a danger that we will exaggerate our wrongs, and an***
2 ***equal danger that we will minimize or rationalize away our part***
3 ***in situations... This Step must cut into our character defects and***
4 ***expose our motives and our actions for what they really were. We***
5 ***have no right to expect these things to reveal themselves.”***
6 ***Gray Book p. 45 Fifth Step Lines 7-14***

7 One acronym for EGO is, “Easing God Out.” Step Five asks us to Admit to God, our-
8 selves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. In this Step, we have
9 to involve The God Of Our Own Understanding out loud with our own lips and voice.
10 Prayer, like in all the other Steps and Traditions, is essential. The Ego will protect itself
11 from ourselves. Our egos served us well in active addiction, but it’s not conducive to our
12 Recovery. Since we are as sick as our secrets, we must be vigilant against our egos. In
13 active addiction, our mouths contributed a lot to our addiction. We used drugs with our
14 mouths, and used our mouths to lie and exaggerate in order to keep using. Step Five
15 is asking us now to use our mouths for healing. Admitting, Praying, and being Honest
16 are some effective tools we use in Narcotics Anonymous to work the Program and Heal.
17 Sometimes the stories and lies we told ourselves and others became distorted from
18 the Truth and Reality. After a while, we couldn’t tell the Truth from fantasy. Many of us
19 included these exaggerations and lies when we told our stories. Over time and Complete
20 Abstinence our minds and bodies start to clear up. Working the Steps the fog starts to lift,
21 it’s an overtime not overnight Process. A deeper Surrender is essential as we progress
22 through the Steps. With each Step the Spiritual Awakening we experience as a result, will
23 begin our Uncovery process. Faith resulting from Hope will allow us to ask for Help. Our
24 Higher Power, Narcotics Anonymous, Sponsor and the Fellowship will Guide us in this
25 Process. Today we use the same mouths that sickened us, to Heal us.

26 *In the moment; After using our mouths to Heal, we will use our mouths to Help others as*
27 *we Carry the Life Saving Message of Narcotics Anonymous.*

“Patience is the great method of the Fellowship. The unconditional love we experience will rejuvenate our will to live and each positive move on our part will be matched by an unexpected opportunity.” 1
Gray Book p. 54 Lines 17-20 Step Nine 2
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One of our slogans in our Gray Book is, “Take It Easy.” In active addiction it wasn’t about 6
 taking it easy, or easy does it, and definitely not Patience. As using addicts it was about 7
 instant gratification, and more of it. We used to live and lived to use. When we were 8
 running out of drugs, we found the means and ways to use more, we just couldn’t get 9
 enough. This made waiting for anything in our Lives difficult. We were looking for the 10
 same results the drugs gave us, instantly. Coming into Narcotics Anonymous we heard 11
 that TIME meant, Things I Must Earn. We also were told that Recovery was an overtime 12
 process not overnight. We learned to Live In The Moment and stay in the day. We experi- 13
 enced Love and Patience from the other members, toward us. The Unconditional Love 14
 and Acceptance we received Helped us develop Patience with ourselves, and later with 15
 others. Although we were seeking micro-wave Recovery, we knew we had to work for it. 16
 The Literature reminds us that we did not become addicts overnight, so getting better 17
 would take time and effort on our part. As we Work and Live the Steps with the Guidance 18
 of a Higher Power, our Sponsors and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, we experi- 19
 ence an Awakening of our Spirits. We do the footwork and leave the results to the God Of 20
 Our Own Understanding. Our Faith increases; we start to see the results of Recovery in 21
 our Lives. 22

We experience the Message of Hope and the Promise of Freedom our Message talks 23
 about. Since addiction affected every area of our Lives, we have to Practice these 24
 Spiritual Principles in every area as well. One of the ways we Practice these Spiritual 25
 Principles is by serving others in our Program. We do Service, keeping in mind that 26
 Service is for those we serve. Our Recovery blossoms, and we lose self-obsession when 27
 we get out of self and help others. Narcotics Anonymous offers Spiritual Unlimited Growth 28
 as we Live The Steps and Traditions. 29

*In the moment; We will show the same Patience and Unconditional Love that was shown 30
 to us in our beginnings, to the newcomers and other members in Narcotics Anonymous. 31*

1 ***“It is important to remember where we came from so that we***
2 ***don’t return. We had to go through what we did to get to where***
3 ***we are now.”***
4 ***Gray Book, p. 42 Lines 4-6 Step Four***

5 Most of us have heard the phrase, “no pain, no gain.” The pain in active addiction didn’t
6 seem to make any sense, as far as a “gain.” Most of the times it seemed senseless and
7 self-afflicted. Most times the result of this pain was followed by negative circumstances
8 and consequences. Arriving to Narcotics Anonymous, most of us didn’t realize that the
9 worst day of our Lives would turn out to be a positive stepping stone that would actually
10 Help us. The pain drove most of us to our Initial Surrender. We recall the poison from the
11 horrors of our addiction. The pain motivated us to change; it also helped us Empathize
12 with others. The Second Step states that this pain forces us to seek a Power Greater Than
13 Ourselves. As we work our Fourth Step, we use that pain to write, as we write we heal. In
14 the beginning of our Journey, many of us used pain as a motivator to change. Working a
15 Living Program we begin to heal. With each Spiritual Awakening, we are Enlightened and
16 the Principles of Freedom and Joy replace our motives. In Recovery, we move through
17 pain and no longer rely on it to motivate change. Our Steps and Traditions are Spiritual
18 Principles to Live by. Whenever we go against Spiritual Principles, we begin to feel the
19 pain that our self-will produces. Living a Spiritual Life sometimes conflicts with our Human
20 condition and not to mention our addiction. Change and pain might be inevitable, but
21 suffering is optional. Today, we welcome Change and Accept the growing pains that
22 sometimes accompany it. Whatever is troubling us at any given moment, becomes our
23 Greatest Teacher.

24 *In the moment; We initially use pain as a motivator to change. As we grow with the Help of*
25 *God, our Sponsors and the Program of Narcotics Anonymous, Goodwill replaces pain as*
26 *the motivator.*

“This can show up as an unexplainable depression or disorientation. It is really related to a poor spiritual condition and can be remedied by an ongoing application of the Twelve Steps of Recovery” 1
Gray Book p. 140 Lines 19-22 2
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Chapter One in our Gray Book p. 7, Lines 25-27 says that “Addiction is a treatable disease: as soon as we begin to “treat” our addiction by working the Twelve Steps that have worked repeatedly, we experience very positive results.” Many of us arrive at our first N.A. Meeting Spiritually dead; Emotionally crippled and in poor Physical Health. Overwhelmed by shame, guilt, self-hatred and the painful rewards of our self-centered lifestyle, we are relieved to find that we have a treatable disease. In N.A., we have evolved a concept of the disease of addiction, as derived by addicts Recovering in N.A. Ours is a Spiritual Solution, a Daily Application of Spiritual Principles that arrests our disease and makes Recovery possible. Our Literature tells us that “With each meeting we attend, seeds planted in earlier meetings are watered until we can see them grow to harvest. This harvest is a form of spiritual growth.” This tells us that our Spirits need to keep Growing and Awakened as a Process and Progression. Recovery is a Process that takes WORK to keep the Miracle alive. Relapse is an automatic Process that takes NO WORK, for us to die. Time after time, we’ve seen long timers in Narcotics Anonymous, tired of Working the Program, give in to medication as an answer to their poor Spiritual condition. A Spiritual Problem cannot be solved with chemicals. If we find ourselves in poor Spiritual condition, we’ve probably slighted in our Step Work, Praying to the God Of Our Understanding, and stopped working with others. A return to the Basics is the only thing that can Help save us at this point. Complacency is the enemy of any addict with clean time. If we never leave the Basics of this Program, we never have to return to them.

In the moment; We will be Grateful we have a Spiritual problem that is treatable by applying the Spiritually based Twelve Steps and Traditions in our Lives. 26
27

1 **“We have an incurable, progressive, terminal disease called**
2 **addiction.”**
3 **Gray Book p. 30 Lines 23-24**

4 Before Narcotics Anonymous existed, many addicts died from the horrors of addiction.
5 Chapter Eight in our Basic Text talks about the end of the road for many of us. This is
6 where our Surrender starts, without this Surrender, there is no Hope. Many of us went
7 to the bitter ends, and few of us were fortunate enough to find ourselves in Narcotics
8 Anonymous. Many times we have asked ourselves, “What is wrong with me?” Everything
9 we tried to better ourselves and our lives failed. Most of the times it seemed to make
10 things worse. Every time we stopped using drugs we found ourselves returning to using.
11 The inner turmoil and pain we experienced without drugs made us look for a Solution. We
12 searched everywhere for that Solution, for a problem we didn’t even understand. Coming
13 into N.A. we were told that we have a disease, not a moral dilemma. Even though we
14 knew we were sick and needed help, we could go back to find our old and familiar ways;
15 trying to obtain the comfort we once knew. We have a disease that is incurable, pro-
16 gressive, and terminal. If the drugs didn’t kill us, we will do the jobs ourselves, this is our
17 self-destructive personality. When we fully accepted the fact that we could not live with or
18 without drugs, the Solution appeared. We knew we belonged in N.A. when we met people
19 just like us who were trapped in their own self-imposed prisons. These same people now
20 seem to be Free of using drugs, and Free of the self-bondage. They told us that we were
21 home, and that they found a way out. The suggestions that they gave us were Free, the
22 ones we would have to pay for were the ones we didn’t take. Together with these other
23 members we were able to get Clean. We could stay Clean that day, and apply Spiritual
24 Principles to arrest the disease for that day. We were told that it was an “I” disease, fol-
25 lowed by a dying program. What we needed was a “We” Solution, followed by a Living
26 Program. In Narcotics Anonymous we are given a daily reprieve from the horrors of addic-
27 tion. That reprieve depends on daily maintenance of our Spirits. By staying and working
28 the Steps, we could live with this disease, instead of dying from it.

29 We Recover from addiction, just for that day. With the help of our Program, fellow addicts
30 and our Higher Power, we never have to use again.

31 *In the moment; We will ask God to Help us understand the full extent of our disease of*
32 *addiction. We will thank God for giving us the Gift of desperation necessary for Daily*
33 *Surrender.*

1 **“Relapse is never an accident. Our knowledge of addiction is not**
2 **enough to stop us from using.”**
3 **Gray Book pg 124 Lines 34-35 Recovery and Relapse**

4 Relapse is never an accident, and it's not part of Recovery. To relapse is to die, there-
5 fore it's part of the disease. The continuing process of relapse is ongoing even through
6 Abstinence. Our Basic Text says that we never fully Recover no matter how long
7 we've been clean. Addiction is progressive and fatal and can only be arrested each
8 day. Although knowledge is essential in the Recovery Process, it's not a substitute for
9 Surrender. The same way doctors practice medicine, and lawyers practice law, we as
10 addicts must Practice Spiritual Principles. Our Literature says that relapse is never an
11 accident, it's a sign that we had a reservation in our Program which left loopholes in our
12 daily Lives. Our Program stops when we don't attend meetings, or stop getting involved in
13 Narcotics Anonymous.

14 The relapse process begins before we actually use drugs. We get high at the end of the
15 relapse, not the beginning of it. The relapse process begins with our Spiritual decay.
16 Just like food decays when the refrigerator is unplugged. Everything seems fine at first.
17 However, the decay process already started. Sometimes this process is unbeknownst to
18 us. Usually our fellow members remind us that we haven't attended meetings in a while.
19 Our Sponsors or our Home Group members may call us on our attitude and behavior.
20 We are each other's eyes and ears, so it's important to stay visible, or at least connected.
21 Working with others is a Solution that enables us to keep what we have. Surrendering to
22 the Principle of Honesty in the First Step can keep us in the basics. If we don't use what
23 we've learned in Narcotics Anonymous, we will lose it in a relapse. Spiritual Maintenance
24 means ongoing Recovery.

25 *In the moment; Our best guarantee against relapse, is Living the Spiritual Principles of*
26 *Narcotics Anonymous.*

**“You can call it love, or harmony, or peace, or cleanness, or good,
or you can call it God.”
Gray Book pg 35 Lines 25-27**

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One of the Precious Gifts of Narcotics Anonymous is that we get to choose a God Of Our Own Understanding, and develop a Relationship with that Higher Power. When we first came to Narcotics Anonymous, some of us didn't have a working Relationship with Life, never mind with a Loving, Caring Higher Power. Some of us had a problem with the God word, or any concept of God. Our First Step shows us that we're not God, and that we had to Admit that we didn't have any answers, when it came to our addiction. The Second Step tells us that the void the drugs left, once removed, had to be replaced with a Power Greater Than Ourselves and that will remove our obsession to use. This Higher Power can be the Group, it can be the Principles of Narcotics Anonymous, it can be our Literature, or it can be God. The only criteria is that this Power be Loving, Caring, and for some members, Forgiving, but it can't be us. Some concepts that work for us is, Good Orderly Direction, another one is Gift Of Desperation, or Grow Or Die. This dependence has to be more about Reliance than just compliance. The important thing is that it's the Process of Coming to Believe that restores us to sanity. The Process is the Action we take, going to Meetings, reading Literature, connecting with others, finding a Sponsor, and joining a Home Group and doing Service in that Group. Our obsession gets removed and is replaced by Spiritual Freshness. Our Spirits Awaken, and we finally feel the Hope and the Promise of Freedom we heard about. With this growing Awareness we start to feel a euphoria, different from the one the drugs first gave us. This one really means that All Will Be Well.

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In the moment; We will be Honest when choosing a Power Greater Than Ourselves, for that we are Responsible.

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1 ***“In N.A. we have feelings we never dreamed of having. We are***
2 ***able to entertain ourselves today. We do things beyond our wild-***
3 ***est imagining.”***
4 ***Gray Book pg 155 Lines 14-16***

5 As addicts, we used drugs to get out of ourselves, we didn't feel comfortable in our own
6 skins, in the Process we stood away from others as well. At the end of our bottoms, the
7 isolation and desperation seemed too much for any human being to handle. For most
8 of us, this is what it took to want to seek a Solution. We still weren't sure that N.A. was
9 for us, we just wanted to stop hurting. Arriving at Narcotics Anonymous we were given
10 suggestions. As we learned to follow these subtle commands, our Perspectives started
11 to change. We found out that we didn't have to use anymore, and that was a great reve-
12 lation. We joined others in their Journeys, and they shared their Recovery with us. They
13 showed us the way that was shown to them, when they first came around. One addict
14 helping another proved to be what was missing in our Lives all along.

15 As others helped us, it helped them as well. As we helped others, our own Recovery was
16 enforced. As we got introduced to the God Of Our Understanding, and took the Steps
17 with a Sponsor, we also started to feel comfortable in our own skins. We experienced
18 Compassion and Empathy toward others. We learned by working with others, we got out
19 of ourselves. The more we gave of ourselves, the more of ourselves we received. Working
20 the Steps and Practicing Spiritual Principles in our Lives, we began to Change. We
21 started to become the person we always wanted to be. We grew to Love Freedom, and
22 our Lives began to be something we wanted to experience. We experienced Love of self
23 and others. Some of our dreams became possibilities, now that we weren't trapped in the
24 disease of addiction.

25 *In the moment; We can build Healthy Relationships, with God, Ourselves, Others and with*
26 *the World at Large. Living Happy, Joyous and Free becomes a Reality.*

1 **“We made direct amends to such people wherever possible,**
2 **except when to do so would injure them or others.”**
3 **Gray Book pg 52 Step Nine Header**

4 All the Steps of Narcotics Anonymous provides Freedom. Step Nine is no exception. Step
5 Nine helps us clear the wreckage of our past, and Frees us to Live Today. Step Eight pre-
6 pared us for this Process by making a list of people, places and things we have harmed,
7 or negatively affected. We became Willing to actually look for these people, places and
8 things, to make Amends to. We go over the List with our Sponsor, and they will show
9 us Where ever possible on the List, that we can make Amends. Our Sponsor will also
10 show us Where on the List, that Making Amends would cause more harm to those and
11 others. With the Help of our Sponsors and the God Of Our Understanding, we take this
12 crucial Step. Some Fruits of this Step are, Freedom, Integrity, Courage, Humility, Dignity,
13 Peace of Mind, and Spiritual Awakening to say the least. Some Principles that make
14 this Process possible are, Willingness, Responsibility, Humility, Anonymity, Forgiveness,
15 Openmindedness, Justice, Trust, Faith, Love, Patience and Tolerance. We ask our Higher
16 Power for the Strength to apply these Principles. We ask our Higher Power, to have no
17 expectation and ask for the Acceptance of the results. Our Amends is unconditional,
18 for the exception to wanting to change. We make Amends for others, but we also do it
19 for ourselves. We walk through the fear and our Higher Power will supply the Courage.
20 There’s also indirect Amends we might have to make, in cases where we can’t contact
21 some people, places or things we have harmed. Remember, we don’t do any of these
22 Steps by ourselves. We will be in Conscious Contact with the God Of Our Understanding,
23 our Sponsors, and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. For this we are Forever
24 Grateful.

25 *In the moment; Our Spirits will continue Growing in this Process.*

1 **“A meeting a day, getting and using phone numbers, and reading**
2 **literature each day are good forms of insurance for cleanliness.”**
3 **Gray Book pg 82 Lines 29-31**

4 When we first came to Narcotics Anonymous, we heard older members give us sugges-
5 tions. At meetings, the secretary often read some suggestions during the format. Make 90
6 meetings in 90 days. The Program suggests that we stay away from people, places, and
7 things we used to use with. Come early stay late, get phone numbers, dial them, don't file
8 them. Get and use an N.A. Sponsor. These were the suggestions that were Free, the ones
9 we paid for, were the ones we didn't take. We paid the price by returning to active addic-
10 tion. Some of us were lucky enough to come back after a relapse. Some of us weren't
11 that lucky, and some got in deeper trouble than when we first came in. Whatever the case
12 we soon learned that taking suggestions helped us stay clean. We also learned that the
13 opposite was also True. We were told that we suffered from an incurable, progressive,
14 fatal disease. The only Hope for us was to arrest and treat the disease, Just For That Day.
15 It was a 24-hour Program, and that depended on our daily maintenance.

16 Each day called for a new Surrender, and the Practice of Spiritual Principles in every
17 area of our Lives. No matter how long we've been clean, we would have to stick to the
18 Basics for our daily reprieve. Narcotics Anonymous offers only one Promise, Freedom
19 from active addiction, and we would have to work for that Promise. Our message is
20 Hope and Promise of Freedom, Just For Today. Through working and Living the Steps,
21 our Personalities do change. In order to keep this Precious Gift and continue experienc-
22 ing Spiritual Awakenings, we must give this Message away. We continue to Practice the
23 Basics, and do service for Narcotics Anonymous.

24 *In the moment; We continue doing what we were doing when we first got here, and even*
25 *more.*

1 ***“If we are hurting, and most of us do from time to time, we learn***
2 ***to ask for help. We find that pain shared is pain lessened.”***
3 ***Grey book pg. 131 lines 21-23***

4 When we used to hurt, we used drugs to not feel hurt. Sharing that hurtful feeling felt like
5 a weakness. We didn't need help, just more drugs.

6 We stumbled into our first meeting scared and spiritually broken, hurt was all we knew.
7 We were welcomed with a smile and a hug, and even though we didn't know what was
8 going on, some of our hurt was lessened by that friendly face and warmth from the hug
9 we just received. Just by showing up is asking for help. Our pain is what got us here, the
10 love and empathy is what keeps us here. Now when having the hurt and finding someone
11 that hurt the same way that eliminates the idea that you're the only one that's feeling that
12 hurt. We carry the load together.

13 We find that when we ask for help and share our pain life gets easier, the pain doesn't dis-
14 appear, it's just less prominent. If one addict keeps all their pain it becomes more concen-
15 trated and feels worse compared to if its shared, the pain is diluted among several addicts
16 and we feel better. We have found that since life goes on, we will get hurt. When this
17 happens, we use our Home Group and our friends in the program to keep us on track. We
18 share our pain with them and by doing that is slowly gets easier.

19 Hurting is a natural feeling which comes to us all from time to time. As recovering addicts,
20 we no longer sedate emotional pain with drugs. There is an alternative to sedation in the
21 rooms of NA. We share in our meetings about our feelings and possibly what we think may
22 be the cause of those feelings. Pain is a powerful feeling that when talked about with
23 other addicts or even just one other addict, can be lessened by sharing this pain.

24 The fellowship of NA is there to help us when we are struggling. The program teaches
25 us new tools to be able to cope with life on life's terms that will happen whether we like
26 it or not. Family and friends will pass away, relationships may end and those things hurt,
27 we need to surrender or else our pain becomes unmanageable. When we apply the
28 principles of NA we get through those things clean and then we are granted experience,
29 strength and hope in those areas and with that we can help other addicts get through that
30 pain.

31 *In the moment: We can share our pain and carry a message of hope, so we can help*
32 *each other. God, help me share my pain the NA way.*

Some of us found getting clean a battle. The program is simple. 1
No one ever said it was easy... 2
Grey Book page 32 line 12 3

Getting clean was a daily fight for us with lots of ups and downs. Its hard dealing with 4
 mental and physical issues as well as emotional. When we begin to see that will power 5
 alone wasn't going to pull us through anymore. We tried countless other remedies, coun- 6
 cillors, psychiatrists, hospitals, lovers, new towns, new jobs. Everything we tried failed. 7
 We quit for a day, a week, or a month perhaps, but sooner or later we took that first pill, 8
 fix, drink, or toke and we were gone again worse than ever. 9

Untill we surrender there is something about addicts... we like to complicate a simple 10
 program. In times of trial, we are faced with a dubious ultimatum we must either change 11
 or go back to using. Before we surrender we have all kinds of excuses and are great at 12
 rationalizing and justifying why we can't do the things neccessary for our recovery. When 13
 we could stand our old ways no longer we began to change. Only under the relentless 14
 attack of pain and suffering did we begin to make a way. When the pain of staying the 15
 same outweighs the pain of doing something different, change is inevitable 16

When we finally opened our eyes to see the simplicity of the program we were expecting 17
 an easy process. We were wrong. Nothing good comes easy, and rarely are easy things 18
 good. Using was easy and stopping was hard. We used daily, if we want to recover it is 19
 going to take a daily program. With the help of addicts, there might be a chance... thanks 20
 be to God there is a process we must follow. It takes time and acceptance to figure it all 21
 out but life always does. In the middle of a true crisis, it is always a relief to know that God 22
 will never tempt us beyond what we can bear. He will always make a way out. We saw the 23
 gifts of recovery and kept fighting. Now we see why the fight is worth the pain 24

*In this moment: After we surrender many of us ask ourselves "why didnt we surrender 25
 sooner" we must get out of our self... in order to understand the beauty of the simplicity of 26
 NA.* 27

***“When we finally became desperate enough to seek help we once
again sought out the company of our fellow addicts”*** 1
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Grey book page 85 line 15 3

Desperation is an all too familiar feeling to us. We were hopeless our lives had fallen apart 4
we thought we had nowhere to turn that noone could understand what was happening 5
and why we used. Some of us as relapseing addicts struggled with commitment issues 6
and reservations. The line once again takes on a whole new meaning. We fought it, cried 7
about it, and feared it non stop.. we were in a dark cycle. Using felt good for a little bit 8
then we felt the emptyness the guilt, fear, and hopelessness we became addicted to a 9
cycle that did us no good but was hard to break away. we hit rock bottom and needed 10
something different in our lives to lift us up. 11

When we came thru the doors of NA it seemed like everyone knew our feelings about 12
using and our desperation to get better. It started out awkward and uncomfortable trying 13
to trust another person enough to ask for help or support. We were so used to building 14
a wall to protect ourselves. Reaching out to another addict felt hard and foriegn. We were 15
leaving behind isolation and the fear of being alone and judged. When we finally did 16
reach out we suddenly felt part of something bigger than ourselves. We realized our way 17
wasnt working and we needed others to show us how to live. 18

We found a new and loving group that doesnt judge and accepts us for who we are. We 19
sought the help of fellow addicts in NA they were the ones that can understand us. Noone 20
else would understand what we are going through like another addict. When things get 21
complicated in our lives we learned to call our sponsor or someone in NA who can give 22
us insight on how to get through the hard times. We feel the ESH abd want it for ourselves. 23
We started to make changes and strive for recovery. We found help and discovered our 24
ability to share our personal experience *can help other addicts.* 25

When we came into the rooms we were greeted with a hug and a genuine desire to get 26
to know us and people that want to be there for us.... its scary and uncomfortable at first 27
but slowly we find love trust and loyalty. In battling the issues previously stated..... it really 28
boils down to the company we keep. Do we wish to further a fresh mentality, the desire 29
to recover and change, by our fellowship with other addicts? Or do we wish to stay the 30
same, by continueing the same path, with the same people, in the same pain? The choice 31
is ours.... 32

*In the moment: We realize when we seek help it brings back a part of us we had lost... 33
when we are clean we are able to live free at last. 34*

1 **"As we went to meetings regularly, we also learned the basic**
2 **value of talking to other addicts who shared our problems and As**
3 **As we went meetings regularly, we also learned the basic value of**
4 **talking to other addicts who shared our problems and goals"**
5 **Gray book pg. 79 lines 30-32**

6 Our literature states that the ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict.
7 There's therapeutic value in one addict helping another, both benefit from sharing with
8 each other. Going to meetings really work, that's where recovery happens. We carry our
9 message, when we share our problems and the solution. Attending meetings is our phys-
10 ical act of surrender. Sharing our recovery with other members, enforces ours even more.
11 Our Higher Power manifests itself as we tap into this power at the meetings. Meeting
12 makers make it, only if they apply what they hear at the meetings. We have to continue
13 taking the suggestions, no matter how long we've been coming around. Two things hap-
14 pen in meetings, someone carries the message, and someone listens to the message. We
15 never know where that message is going to come from. We have to be physically, men-
16 tally and spiritually present for recovery to happen. Since one addict helping another is
17 without parallel, there's no exterior motives when we share or ask for help. There's nothing
18 new under the sun, when it comes to our stories, somewhere, somehow, someone has
19 gone thorough what we're going through, and they can share how they remain clean and
20 got hope. In turn we help others when we've been through what they're going through,
21 we offer what worked for us. We share hope. We first have to remember, if we are not the
22 problem, there is no solution. Making meetings is our first step.

23 *In the moment: we will surrender physically by going to meetings, we will not only share*
24 *our problems, but also our solution.*

**"We came to hate ourselves for wasting the talents with which
we had been endowed and for the trouble we were causing our
families and others."**

Gray Book pg 5 line 25

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For a person living with an addict, for their families and their kids they're always fearing
an outburst and never trusting what the addict says. We only could think about what we
needed and not how it affected the people around us. We manipulated and stole from
those closest to us. We became a burden on our families, often creating financial diffi-
culties and emotional pain. Our addiction led us to become people we never wished to
be. However, none of us had realized what we were becoming. We became people who
were constantly letting down loved ones and ourselves. We would often wake up hating
ourselves each morning and night. Most of us were just sick of being sick and tired and
wanted a new way to live without having to use drugs as a way to do so. We had never
thought of ourselves as angry people, but when it came to anything getting in the way of
our addiction, it would lead to a constant defense and often a rage directed at those who
least deserved it.

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We had given up on our dreams and everything that was important to us. We wasted
away what talents we had on drugs that we could have used for good instead of the
troubles we caused family and others with our using. In one point or another we've been
praised on the great talents and skills God bestowed on us, only to allow it to escape our
grasp as if it were sand in our hands. Many have asked ourselves "Will we ever be able
to harness our talents in a positive way?" Many of us came into NA with talents we thought
were wasted. We may have known we had talents but didn't know how to use them.
When we reflected on the time wasted, along with our talents, resentments would fester
and build like cancer until we became our own worst enemy.

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Some of us asked... "Will we truly be able to make amends and be forgiven?" Only when
we surrendered to our higher power and made amends to ourselves were we allowing
the healing process to begin within. We turned towards our family and loved ones for the
wrong doing of our hands. We learned to ask ourselves "can we forgive ourselves?" Life
should be happy and stress free, but living in addiction is stressful.

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*In this moment: NA gave us a place to find our talents once again. We learned how to
harness our God given talents. We learned to use the creative freedom NA has to bring
out our talents and help us carry our message.*

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1 **"If we want to feel good, we have to stop doing the things that**
2 **make us feel bad." Gray Book pg lines 9-10**

3 Recovery can be as simple as removing the negative parts of our lives and allowing the
4 good parts to replace it. Simplicity is important in NA. It is so simple, but it was hiding
5 from us our whole lives until we choose to recover. The drugs made us feel good as long
6 as we had them. When we ran out, we had to deal with the withdrawals and the reality
7 around us, our bodies began to think we needed them. We must step back from the
8 negative actions and take that first right step in affirmation that we are all in and are tired
9 of living a life of insanity. It sucks that we thought everything good in life can't last or ends
10 poorly. Food makes us fat, alcohol makes us sloppy, and drugs made us different even
11 though we thought we were better. Sometimes doing things we never thought we would
12 to keep us high makes us feel worse such as hurting loved ones, stealing and so on. As
13 we constantly struggle to make our way in recovery we came to the conclusion, it's our
14 own actions that are the root of our pain and despair.

15 We know that we can't be good and bad. There is no gray area when using is removed
16 from our lives by our higher power it is a gift, not everybody gets. To use is to die. We
17 can't deal with drugs anymore. We can't sell them, give them or even be around them.
18 When we try, we open the door for relapse, Our privilege to use like "gentlemen" has been
19 removed.

20 Learning to let go of our selfish desires and choosing to be a part of instead of apart from
21 has changed many of our lives. Ultimately, we are just human, with the same fears, long-
22 ings and troubles as everyone else. NA has turned self-seeking addicts into loving, pro-
23 ductive members of society. We learned to be more supportive of NA and shy away from
24 the mindful obsessiveness that addiction brought us to. We start to live the straight and
25 narrow life and see that we start to accomplish our goals and build relationships that we
26 have destroyed. We all want to live a normal life that we see and hear about that we may
27 envy. We accept responsibility for our part instead of blaming others. Each right choice
28 shows us how good we can feel...and spurs us on to the next one.

29 *In this moment: we grow by just putting one foot in front of the other doing the right things*
30 *for the right reasons.*

"In dealing with other people in our lives, we develop a loving attitude. We forgive more easily, anger more slowly, expect less, and give more to our brothers and sisters. We come to see all people as our brothers and sisters. We have learned this kind of unconditional love from our fellow addicts in Narcotics Anonymous." Grey book PG 72 lines 21-26.

When we were out in active addiction, we thought we were nice people. It turns out we were actually very selfish. We were easily angered, and quick to show it. We wanted what we wanted, and we wanted it NOW. Our self-centered, self-seeking attitudes made us angry, lonely individuals incapable of having healthy relationships. Our character defects came out and tried to destroy our spiritual principles we strived for. We didn't consider how our actions impacted others around us.

As we recover, something happens. We get out of self and become a part of a community of recovering addicts. NA has shown us unconditional love when we wanted or needed to feel loved and no one else was there. We experience or witness this unconditional love when we see an addict, or are the addict, that reestablishes a new clean date. This nonjudgmental attitude of acceptance is foreign to us before coming to NA. It's a work in progress every day to work towards peace, joy, and forgiveness with others. We genuinely want to help others throughout their recovery and be a part of their growth.

By getting humble, we become able to become a part of instead of a part From society. We truly become nicer, more generous people. We consider everyone around us as family. Practicing tolerance and patience in dealing with other people helps us keep a loving attitude towards others.

In this moment: we realized we have become responsible, productive members of society all because addicts lived what they said when they told us they will love us until we can love ourselves.

1 **"By telling our own story someone else is bound to be suffering**
2 **from a similar problem and our experience tells them how to deal**
3 **with it.... what works for one , might work for another."**
4 **Gray book page 67 line 23**

5 When we share our experience it will hopefully help the still suffering addict. In this self-
6 less program we seek to guide one another to find a new way to not only live... but live
7 better more fulfilling and prosperous lives. By telling our own story we allow our disease
8 no shadow to hide in... and addiction dies in the light of honesty. We enable other addicts
9 the solutions and tools they may be seeking. Letting another gain insight from something
10 outside themselves helps us see the beauty of one addict helping another.

11 We thought we knew it all. Anonymity is half of our name but the principal behind it is
12 were our freedom begins. When we get here it is easy for us to only look at the differ-
13 ences. We all came into the rooms the same way. Many of us coming into recovery were
14 uncertain, scared and fearful of the unknown. Drugs had made our lives unmanageable
15 as we continued to come back and come back clean we all hear something that is not far
16 from our own experience. It is freeing to only share our ESH and leave the rest in God's
17 hands.

18 When we share about our recovery both the good and the bad we become able to be
19 part of the program. We see others that find similarities in our stories and learn again that
20 we are never alone... and never on our own in our struggles. We suggest we attend meet-
21 ings, sit and listen, and learn how the system works. This sounds like support in a simple
22 form... listening and giving suggestions. It is through this unity that we are bound together
23 to ensure that none who enter and want to stay slip though the cracks.

24 *In this moment: When we share honestly we help each other feel less unique. We draw*
25 *our strength from each other by sharing our past lives and remembering what it was like.*
26 *No one can argue with another when they share their experience instead of counseling.*

**" Living clean for a period of time provides valuable experience
working the program through many life changes".** 1
Grey book pg. 123 lines 5-7 2
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As we stay in the program for a while, we may notice that some of the things that we do 4
for our recovery maintenance have evolved over time and changed. It is important to 5
remember that we are given only a daily reprieve from the disease of addiction and are 6
never "cured". The staples of our program, which include the 12 steps, writing, meetings, 7
prayer, and fellowship with other recovering addicts is just as powerful a tool against 8
relapse now as when we first came into the program. What changes is our lives, and our 9
thinking. That is part of the recovery promise that our literature tells us. As a direct result 10
of working the program to the best of our ability, for a period of time, recovery takes on 11
a new meaning. Today we are able to grow emotionally, and spiritually, instead of stay- 12
ing stuck as we did for so long during active addiction. This is true for all addicts who 13
choose to continue to grow in the program. We can provide valuable experience for new- 14
comers, and old timers alike, if we continue to work the tools of the program and continue 15
to live just for today. Over time our ability to deal with life clean, has taken on a whole new 16
meaning for us. We can look forward to dealing with life's challenges today instead of 17
running away from them. Listening to other addicts share these experiences at meetings, 18
about how they get through these challenges clean by utilizing the NA program, and all 19
the tools they put into practice in order to get through problems, gives us hope that we 20
too can get through our own problems clean. 21

*IN THE MOMENT: Today we can share our experiences of working through life's problems 22
with other addicts by sharing solutions at meetings, and how this program has helped us 23
to come out the other side clean. 24*

1 **" Many of us did not come to our fellowship with an sincere**
2 **desire to stay clean. That came after the fog had lifted and after**
3 **we realized that staying clean was possible".**
4 **Grey book pg. 120 lines 11-14**

5 Many addicts come here from all walks of life, and all different backgrounds. Once we
6 make it to an NA meeting, we will find this out after a short period of time by listening
7 to all the other addicts in the rooms share their experiences and stories. We may have
8 gotten here through jails, or from an institution, or from the street, but the important thing
9 is that we made it here alive. Many of our fellow active addicts aren't so lucky, and
10 find themselves still out there living in misery, or perhaps locked up for long periods of
11 time, or even dead. It doesn't really matter how we found ourselves here, and clean,
12 or whether we decided at the time to change our life, once we are here, we have a new
13 chance at life, which we never had before we made it here. If we follow suggestions of
14 fellow addicts who have been here before us, and work this simple program of Narcotics
15 Anonymous, we will develop the desire to continue on this path, and an honest desire to
16 stay clean from all drugs, and mind or mood changing chemicals. It may take some of us
17 longer than others, but if we stick and stay, we can be here for the miracle to happen. We
18 will realize that staying clean is a real possibility, and with that realization, we have a new-
19 found hope in life to begin to participate in a meaningful, and productive life, free from the
20 grips of addiction.

21 *IN THE MOMENT: Today we will renew our commitment to our recovery by attending an*
22 *NA meeting, and by reaching out to another addict to share and be part of the miracle of*
23 *recovery from addiction together.*

**“We seek solutions rather than dilemmas. Productive means
 being clean, creative and loving today”** 1
Grey book pg. 123 lines 16-18 2
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In order to continue to be a productive member of society, we as addicts need to keep 4
 our priorities in order. First must be our own recovery, we must never forget that we are 5
 all addicts, and are powerless over this disease of addiction. We must fit our lives to the 6
 program, and not the other way around, as so many addicts who fail try to do. Staying 7
 clean is always our number one priority, and not using no matter what a simple way is to 8
 remember that. We have tools today to help us get through anything that we may come 9
 across in life, and getting to the other side of situations without using, damaging others, or 10
 ourselves is what the tools of the NA program guide us in. It takes practice. Being suc- 11
 cessful in life, and our relations with others takes work. We didn’t come to NA possessing 12
 the necessary tool set to get us through life, or we wouldn’t have needed to come here in 13
 the first place. We wouldn’t have been running to buy drugs daily to escape life instead. 14
 Learning the art of solution finding through the drudges of life on life’s terms is where we 15
 practice these principles and all that we learn from our program and the steps. Taking 16
 what we learn here at our meetings and applying it to all aspects of our lives gives us 17
 renewed energies to pursue the necessary actions that lead to solutions today. Our past 18
 habits, and survival tactics will keep us stuck, and will not help us today, and unless we 19
 are willing to change, we will find ourselves angry, and frustrated at life, where we need 20
 not be. Remember this is a “ WE” program and we keep in constant contact with other 21
 recovering addicts as to not isolate ourselves. Getting to meetings regularly and sticking 22
 to what works keeps us in the solution and gets us out of the problems. 23

*IN THE MOMENT: Today we will talk to others about finding the solution to problems that 24
 may be getting us down. We will not allow ourselves to fall into anger and depression, 25
 and instead put our energies towards taking the actions necessary to stay in the solution. 26*

1 **"There is no area of our lives that the disease does not affect.**
2 **The truth is that fear is present in every area of our lives."**
3 **Gray Book pg. 54 lines 28-30**

4 Our disease affects everything we do in our lives, including our decision making. We may
5 never know how much the disease of addiction has affected our lives. It has affected our
6 family, our jobs, marriages, recreation, finances, and most of all our spirituality. Spiritually
7 we were empty, our families torn apart, our homes broken or nonexistent, and relation-
8 ships based off of unhealthy needs for attachment or using someone for something they
9 had. In short, it had affected our whole lives. We are restrained by addiction. We are
10 subject to it as a slave is subject to his master. The disease is always alive; it does not
11 go away. When it creeps in, we may not be aware of it because we are caught in the
12 moment. When it takes a hold of us, we tend to be less able to understand which way to
13 go until we start making mistakes with our using. One of our character defects shows the
14 more unaware we are of drifting into isolation. We grow farther away from the program
15 and closer to relapse. We thought when we stopped using, our problem was cured. But
16 the truth was, we did not know ourselves without the drugs. We lived in fear. We found
17 that these things just got worse and didn't seem to get better for fear of the unknown we
18 held. We feared how people might react. As we recover, we see how fear has been a con-
19 stant struggle for us to overcome. We were more comfortable staying in the pain we knew
20 than doing something different. We learned all we have to change is everything. "We have
21 nothing to fear but fear itself." We learned to overcome things that baffled us before. By
22 putting one foot in front of the other, we learned how we could get through any fears we
23 had and get through them clean. Through NA we learned how to face our fears instead of
24 running. Once we become open-minded, we can fully surrender and overcome the fear;
25 placing faith and trust in the program and a higher power replaces that fear.

26 *In this moment: with the help of God, we find it is possible to live a new way of life.*

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26 *In this moment: with the help of God, we find it is possible to live a new way of life.*

1 **"The Eight Step is not easy; it demands a new kind of honesty**
2 **about our relations with other people. We had to feel better inter-**
3 **nally before we could even bear to think about whom we had**
4 **harmed and how we had harmed them, and exactly what was the**
5 **way we perceived ourselves."**
6 **Pg. 50, lines 27 - 31. Step 8**

7 Some of us have asked ourselves that age old question a thousand times, "What did I do
8 to deserve this?" The harm we caused others can seem very overwhelming. Truth and
9 honesty are key for us if we are to live lives in recovery and break the chains that have
10 held us in pain and misery of addiction. Honesty was not something we were great at
11 when we came to NA. We may have thought we were, but truly we had no clue. With the
12 eight Step, we develop a selfless form of honesty. Being totally honest can show us the
13 mess we made without condemning us to the death sentence we gave ourselves using
14 drugs. We are working on our forgiveness of self at this time. It can be hard; our families
15 do not yet understand our full attention is on recovery. Many of us in our active addiction
16 harmed so many others whom we eventually need to become honest with and amend
17 our wrongs. Our addiction had taken over so much that we lied to people and stole from
18 people, even the ones closest to us to get what we wanted. Not caring how it affected
19 other people. We struggled with facing our fears, guilt, and shame. Before being able to
20 face this, we must truly reflect and focus on ourselves in order to obtain internal peace
21 and harmony. We have to feel better about ourselves before we can approach the peo-
22 ple, we hurt on how we hurt them. We have to deal with our issues before we can deal
23 with others. By doing so it helps us to amend the dark actions of our past. We should ask
24 ourselves, "Have we been hurting others?" If we can admit to this truth, the only question
25 is who? We find we were never as bad as we thought, or as good either.

26 *In this moment: The steps help us get honest. This honesty helps us as we go through*
27 *each step on to the next step. We become able to face the harm we have done, so we*
28 *can move forward onto step 9. This is our only chance at a peaceful and prosperous exis-*
29 *tence.*

“When the drugs go and the addict works the program, wonderful things happen. Lost dreams awaken and new possibilities spring.”
Pg.142 Ln.2-4

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We come here hopeless and broken. When we arrive at Narcotics Anonymous, the first surrender we must all practice is complete abstinence. We cannot allow the recovery process to take hold if our minds are still clouded by drugs. When we show that we are changing it shows that the program does work. Seeing others full of life and hope will keep us coming back. When we leave behind our old ways, we pave the way for new opportunities. We let go of the past, and become active, willing members.

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We hear about sponsorship and service work, we see people living without the unmanageability that the drugs brought. Wanting out of the hopeless desperation, we get suggestions to work the program. So, we find sponsors, work steps and some life come back into us. We are presented with endless possibilities. When we start working the steps, our attitude towards life changes and we can be a productive part of society instead of a wasted human being. Each day is a new opportunity for growth.

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No longer is our lives hindered by the effects of using, we now have the ability to accomplish great things. We see that the program works for us much more than the obsession over drugs. We finally have the freedom we had once lost and we are free to dream. The love we regain towards ourselves and others is remarkable. We take suggestion from experienced members and we don't use, no matter what!

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In this moment: Today we have a spiritual solution, and drugs are not sufficient anymore. This is an awakening of the spirit. We chase our dreams as new possibilities present themselves.

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1 **"We must puncture our egos and realize that we have much more**
2 **work to do."**

3 **Pg. 49 Lines 22-23 Step Seven**

4 When we were using, we never listened to anyone else's opinion on our using because
5 we were closed-minded and in denial. As active addicts, we were big-headed egomani-
6 acs, always thinking of ourselves first and ensuring we got what we wanted. We thought
7 we had everything figured out, but we had never been more wrong. It's important that we
8 realize there is much more to life than the way we've been living. We need to understand
9 that living life on our terms will never work for us. Never thinking of how our actions may
10 affect others. Ego gets in our way of growth if we let it. We must get out of our self-cen-
11 teredness and realize we can't do this alone. We let go of our pride and hear others when
12 they offer suggestions that can help us. We come to realize we are not in control and
13 turn our lives over to our higher power for guidance and open our minds to allow growth.
14 There is so much work we need to work on but to remember the principles of NA, "easy
15 does it" and "one day at a time." We don't usually carry a pen around to deflate our egos,
16 but when we do it starts with the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous. By working the steps
17 with a sponsor helps build growth.

18 In order to work these steps, we have to develop the principle of humility. We must hum-
19 ble ourselves, remain teachable, and get to work in order to learn and grow as we move
20 forward. Humility is accepting our place in the present. We will never be perfect and
21 being humble helps us remember we are not God. Not more than, not less than...life as it
22 is...that is how it works.

23 We must realize that our recovery process is a long journey. Not just a 30-day treatment
24 place, but an everyday thing. A lifelong process not just a short process. We must do all
25 we can to ensure we let go of ego, so we are not Edging God Out.

26 *In this moment: we must always remember we need to be beacons, not only for our-*
27 *selves but for other addicts also.*

"Here we found Hope. If the Narcotics Anonymous program worked for them, it might work for us." 1
Pg. 17 Lines 12 - 13 2
What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program? 3
4

We could not quit using by ourselves. After countless times trying, we finally gave up and decided to give something new a try, the NA program. We came in hopeless and beaten. The disease of addiction ran our lives and we couldn't see any way out of our destructiveness. Many of us were in despair and felt hopeless. Our lives had hit rock bottom, and we had nothing. Then, coming into the rooms of NA, we found a shimmer of hope. Where we were once alone, we now had found strength in numbers. We all had found something special when we walked into these rooms. We see people smiling and laughing, something many of us forgot how to do. We wonder where this has been in our lives, and after attending a few meetings, we found hope that we could have what they have. Hope is the light at the end of the tunnel. 5
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We found hope when we surrendered and put ourselves in God's hands and in God's will. Early on, we watched others in the rooms...seeing others recover from addiction, and live new lives. We found other addicts that we could relate to who had gotten out of the mess and carried a message. If the NA program worked for them, then it might work for others. We learned quickly that hope is contagious, and we were ready for a new disease. In Narcotics Anonymous, we are loved until we can love ourselves. We hope that, "An addict, any addict, can stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life." 15
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In this moment: Hope is a four-letter word, and so is love. In the fellowship, we hope to see people stick around long enough to be able to be loved. 22
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**“By recognizing the defects in our characters, and letting go
of them spiritually, we were ready to have sanity restored to us.
Grey book pg. 79 lines 22-24**

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Many of us hold onto the belief when we get to the program of NA, that we can straighten out our lives, if only we can stay clean, and put the drugs down. It doesn't take long before we realize that drugs were only the tip of the iceberg. We have a tendency to hold onto our old beliefs, and way of thinking, even though we may be clean. This is where we all begin our recovery process, and slowly the realization that we have many lives, and living problems that we were hiding by using drugs. Our first realization that we need help, and that the program of Narcotics Anonymous has the help we need, gives us hope that we can do this. The proof is in the many addicts who have come before us, and have been practicing these principles, and in doing so have stayed clean, and improved their lives. Understanding that our old ways of going about life will not serve us well today, and will keep us clinging to fear, and desperation. Many addicts who are unwilling to let go our past behaviors, and thinking will find it hard to stay clean. We must begin to slowly let go of our past, in order to make room for new habits, and as a result of this, and new way of thinking of life, ourselves, and others, gives us a new life that offers happiness, and joy. We learn to rely on our Higher Power for strength to help us to let go, through our step work, and through talking with, and fellowshiping with others in the meetings. Staying on the road of recovery is a constant cycle of letting go and moving on. We learn that we are opening the door for Gods help when we are able to do this, and this helps to strengthen our belief, and offers us some of the sanity talked about in our literature. Today we can overcome the fear of letting go and letting God.

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IN THE MOMENT: Today we look forward to allowing Gods help into our lives. We can let go of the wheel today, and practice turning our will and life over to His care.

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**“The same power that has helped us deal with our obsession will
be the guide and source of courage when we ask for it.”
Grey Book Page 148 Line 9-10**

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We came to Narcotics Anonymous broken. Spiritually bankrupt. When we were using our vision of Hope was slim. That little bit of trust is vital when we are desperate for courage. We were constantly obsessed with the idea of ways and means to get more this is one of the core symptoms of the disease of addiction. Fear is the power that helped with our obsession to use, the fear to lose everything that we worked for everything we gained in our lives. Trusting our higher power is one of the first obstacles we face in the program. But as we go to more meetings and listen to others share we realize that a higher power is what will save us. We are so thankful that we have been given the power to let go of our past.

As long as we are centered in our higher power and not in ourselves we are able to find the courage to share at meetings. Courage is not of our own but rather a power greater than us. Courage is a very useful spiritual principle, the more we rely on our higher power to give it to us in our daily lives, the easier it becomes to find it. Each day our courage of doing the next right thing makes us become a better person. Before we knew it we were able to share and reach out with the courage. We learned that being open minded willing and honest with ourselves and others there is a better way to live. We feel welcome and most importantly we see freedom from addiction. We ask for help in another profound moment of surrender. We are not alone. We start to see that the power is always with us this power is our strength and with courage we continue through the steps on our new journey.

Our higher power is truly our own. Every member has a different outlook and that is powerful. That is magical. No longer haunted by our past we feel a sense of freedom that has been given to us freely. What we were once so desperate to find-our higher power shows us that we had it all along.

In this moment: Our higher powers will for us is always a lot better than our own. When we try to live on our own will bad things will happen. When in doubt always pray.

1 **"Our experience is that those who begin sharing innermost**
2 **feelings, emotions and thoughts with other recovering addicts,**
3 **rather than giving a drug history, tend to make more rapid**
4 **growth."**

5 **Pg. 68, Lines 18-21**
6 **Step Twelve**

7 Before coming into NA, most often we hid our feelings and emotions. Bottling them up to
8 the point of explosion, which we typically released in violent or self-harming ways. If we
9 are to recover, we need not glorify or expose our use. Of course, we used drugs, but that
10 was just a symptom of our disease. we feel if we don't start to get away from war storying
11 and start dealing with our emotions, feelings, and the character defects of us, we have a
12 greater chance of going back. Addicts who begin to talk about their addiction and who
13 are more openly vocal about their addiction, make more growth in their recovery.

14 We came into recovery then, only wanting to initially share our war stories, not our emo-
15 tions; still being closed up as we always had. Then we began to see that those who were
16 most successful were sharing their feelings and emotions, thus growing in depth in char-
17 acter. Recovery begins when we shine light on the reasons behind our use. Fear, anger,
18 self-pity, doubt and confusion all grow in the dark. When exposed, they lose their power
19 over us. They can no longer keep us sick and lead us back to the symptom of active use.
20 Without them, we are free to live happy and productive lives. We shared too, and began
21 to bloom. In our experiences of sharing feelings and emotions rather than sharing war sto-
22 ries and glorifying those horror stories, we may heal some of these scars that have been
23 hurting for so long. When we begin to share with other addicts our innermost feelings and
24 emotions, we are no longer running from what we fear. To feel the emotions is something
25 we are not used to; it's growth. We learn how to actually be honest not only with ourselves
26 but others as well. We are all addicts who used to escape reality, emotions, and feelings,
27 however to truly talk about what we were running from and why can lead us to a new free-
28 dom, which we will never have to use again to cope with.

29 *In This Moment: Experience shared is experience gained. We cannot truly recover without*
30 *giving back what was given to us.*

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