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*Your Fellowship Magazine*

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*Like it was when NA was new and young and life or death  
intense:*

*You matter to us so we will tell you the truth as we know it  
with nothing held back.*

THE  
NEW/OLD  
**NEW/OLD**  
WAY

*"... so that no addict seeking recovery need ever die..."*

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The New/Old

**NA Way**

Volume 21

February - March 2019





The New/Old NA WAY Magazine

Volume 21

February 2019 - March 2019

This magazine was written in open participation by members of the Groups of The Anonymity Foundation and members of the Groups who participate in the Fellowship Service Conference and the European Fellowship Service Conference



All

ABOARD !!

# The New/Old NA Way

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## Resistance to Our Message

Our Primary Purpose is to carry the N.A. Message. We carry the Message and God delivers it. That's an easy enough concept to Understand and Accept. It clearly states our Responsibility in that aspect. Our Literature says that an addict can't be forced to stop using. An addict will stop when they're ready. We plant the seeds and Hopefully it will take root when it supposed to, if at all. Some of us came into N.A. decades ago. It seems that back then addicts came in with a desperation, that they were Willing to do whatever it took to Recover. Our Message of Hope and Promise of Freedom was well received for the most part. The challenge of the N.A. Message was not an issue. Either it was Accepted or not. Today in N.A., in my experience, is getting more and more difficult to Carry the N.A. message. The newcomers that are coming in today, mostly the ones that are coming out of rehabs, are not only resistant to our Message and Principles but are contradicting it. The N.A. Literature that's written by professionals don't help either. I find myself arguing and defending our Message instead of carrying it. A lot of newcomers are on some type of medication for the Treatment of addiction. Some are newly put on some type of medication for depression and anxiety. These new members are not giving N.A. a chance. Those Steps are design to lift obsession and cravings, as well as treating depression

and anxiety. Some H&I committees, around the country, are censoring what speakers say as not to offend the rehabs, or go against their policies, etc. That's fine it's not our job or message to tell rehabs what they should be doing or not doing. Part of the Message of Narcotics Anonymous is Abstinence from all drugs in order to Recover. In other words, we don't use drugs to Recover. We use Twelve Spiritually based Steps and Traditions. How can we leave the important Principle of Abstinence out? It is the Cornerstone of our Program. Newcomers that are not on any type of the medications, mentioned earlier, is a rarity. When you tell them, they can't work on any Steps till they're completely Clean, they catch an attitude and don't attend the HG anymore. They usually find a Sponsor that agrees with their idea of what's Clean. I Sponsor two new addicts now and they're both clean over 7 years and are completely clean no additives. When I'm asked to Sponsor people, I first ask them if they're on any medication and if so, do they have a plan with their doctor to get off of them. Then and only then can we do any work. Meanwhile they can attend meetings and call me if they wish. Needless to say, it's getting more and more difficult to Carry This Life Saving Message of Narcotics Anonymous.



## Concerning Relapse IP

**Recovery: Restoration or return to any former and better state or condition.**

Recovery in NA from the disease of addiction is a result of practicing principles in all our affairs.

Recovery happens when we surrender to spiritual principles.

Abstinence does not equal recovery. Recovery is working the steps, finding out who we are, and learning to live. Recovery must be worked on a daily basis or relapse can happen.

The 12 steps help us to experience recovery. We don't use, we call our sponsor regularly, attend meetings daily, have a Home Group, and work Steps in our lives. We are on a path of recovery.

The difference for us between now and then is complete surrender to the process of recovery. We had come to believe that we are addicts with the disease of addiction who must change everything in order to recover. To change we work the 12 Steps and admit that this is about recovery not perfection. We must remain teachable.

Since our early introduction into recovery a lot of questions needed to be answered. Such as, what is recovery and how do you maintain it. The answer is to not participate in any area of our disease. This starts with complete abstinence from all mind- or mood-altering chemicals, including drug replacement therapy medication (DRT's). As we rid ourselves of them, we are able to start a recovery process with the steps.

Remarkable things happen as we start applying Spiritual Principles. Our lives improve as we start facing many self-made obstacles. As we start getting past these obstacles our self-worth grows as does our hope. We find that faith feeds our courage and it no longer matters if it's a mountain or a molehill we are facing. We know in our hearts we can and will move forward no matter what.

We continue to maintain our ongoing recovery by developing a pattern of meetings, steps, sharing and listening. Becoming involved, we begin to feel a part of.

When we stop this process and exert self-will, we begin setting ourselves up for relapse. We don't forget what we had learned; we just wallow in self-pity. Self-will is what almost killed us. Relapse is never an accident. Often others see the signs long before we admit reservations exist in our lives. We find reasons not to go to our regular meetings. We may stop calling the members who know us best. We get angry with the people who love us. In short, we start listening to our addiction, focusing only on the negative.

We became our own Higher Power, our own Group Conscience. Our own everything, the disease was winning. We did everything that we heard in the meetings not to do.

Meeting attendance goes away, spiritual program goes out the door and we're left standing alone again with feelings of emptiness. Once starting the emotional roller coaster, we fall deeper into desperation looking for a way out. When this hap-

## 14th Annual Fellowship Service

### Conference for N.A.

When: June 14th thru June 16, 2019

Where: Hamburg, PA Place. Olivet Mountain Camp

1540 Mountain Ave.

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Cost: \$95.00 per person

Price includes all meals (and lodging if needed)

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(Adversity does not build character, it Reveals it.) More Will Be Revealed.....



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## Upcoming Events

### ANNUAL 12 STEP RETREAT

Date: February 15th thru February 17th, 2019  
Columbiana, Ohio

### 14TH ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP SERVICE CONFERENCE FOR N.A.

Date: June 14th thru June 16th, 2019  
Hamburg, PA

### 4TH ANNUAL EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIP SERVICE CONFERENCE FOR N.A.

Date: October 10th thru October 13th, 2019  
Zevenaar, The Netherlands

Your event here? Send information to [nahelp.org@gmail.com](mailto:nahelp.org@gmail.com)

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pens, all avenues generally close and we feel hopeless. Rather than share these thoughts with others we start answering ourselves therefore setting the stage for failure.

### **Relapse: To fall back into illness after apparent recovery**

Just like recovery is a process, relapse is a process.

The mental lapse happens first, it usually begins with "I think...(i.e., I can skip this meeting, I got this, I need to take care of family and job first, those people don't know, get nothing from those meetings....). Then it is followed by the spiritual lapse "I don't..." (i.e., need to pray, work the steps, call my sponsor, share at meetings, do the next right thing, be honest with what I'm feeling) ...

The physical relapse (using) i.e. I am, I want, I can, I will) happens last. This is why we need to nurture our spirits with a positive attitude on a daily basis.

When recovery is not our priority, we forget how to live clean and fall back into addictive behaviors, often leading to relapse. We must recover or die. We need to watch

people, places and things to guard our recovery to prevent relapse.

When we do not apply the steps in our lives, we are a mess. We stop following through with commitments. Sometimes we never fully surrender. Other times, after surrender and time in recovery, we walk away from the actions and principles that kept us clean.

Relapse is a conscious decision clothed in apathy, complacency and denial. What starts as random thoughts of dissatisfaction and boredom turn into secrecy, self-obsession and an action plan to use. The longer that the internal dialogue stays internal the more we feed oxygen to the fire.

When the question "What if" gets hold of our thought process it begins to take up residence in our heads, ultimately to be answered by "Well, maybe" or "I could just do that". The day comes when "Am I going to use?" is answered by "I don't know". At that point it's only a matter of time before picking up.

We will either actively seek it out, driving to the dope house or liquor store or the doctor's office, or we put



ourselves into a situation we think we can control. Physical or mental pain may also initiate an obsession to use.

People who live this simple program do not relapse. A relapse can be fatal. Relapse brought us to surrender our will and way to God and this program.

**Return (Dictionary definition) to go or come back, as to a former place, position, or state.**

Coming back to the rooms of NA after a relapse takes great courage. To regain recovery takes a willingness to change followed by action. We need to accept that if we don't change, we will only repeat the same behavior. We need to honestly look at how we altered our personal program from when we first got clean to when we relapsed. What did we stop doing? What excuses did we tell ourselves? What did we put into our life that was more important than our recovery? Are we now willing to go to any lengths to stay clean?

One day clean is the beginning of hope. Two days clean is the beginning of desire. And three days clean is the beginning of freedom. We often tell ourselves that other members look down on us or dislike us after we relapse. We use this as an excuse to not come back. Yet most members with time have been to enough funerals and would much rather have you in a meeting with a chance to start over. We want you back in our lives. We want you to succeed, but you must be the one to reach out. You must listen to that will to live. After relapse, you may

feel like your spirit is broken, that you will never find the passion and joy you first felt in NA. You may not feel the same way, but you can find a deeper, firmer resolve each day.

When we stopped trying to hide our hurt and finally let people in is when we started to grow again.

When the pain was great enough, we finally surrendered. We have tried every way we could, and it never worked until we fully surrendered.

*"We have never seen a person relapse who has thoroughly lived the Narcotics Anonymous Program". \**

Our choices boil down to this: Recovery or relapse. "Basic Text"



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## DRTs in N.A.

You hear a lot of talk about DRTs in N.A. and in other outside Media Forums. What people fail to realize is that the title DRT only pertains to opiate based drugs used to replace opiate use, one opiate replaces another, is what DRT means. Some members may argue that the medication they're on for addiction treatment is not DRT, and they're right. The argument with these members is, are they Clean.? Vivitrol and other non-based opiate drugs used for addiction treatment fall under MAT (medication assisted treatment) so today any DRT also fall under MAT. In NA we do not distinguish one drug for another. So, we must be clear and call them what they are in NA and the secular world, MATs. Some of these medications although are not opiate based still relieves cravings to use and also act as a blocker in one way or another. They relieve the pain of living without drugs and obsession to use. In Narcotics Anonymous the Second Step tells us that when we stop using drugs or ANYTHING TO REPLACE THEM, we will feel pain. It goes on to say that the pain will FORCE us to seek a Power Greater than ourselves to relieve our Obsession(crawings) to use. We use a Power Spiritual in nature to help us with our obsession and withdrawals, that is unless there's a medical risk, for example, alcohol and benzodiazepines. These two exceptions may need medical detox, but not treatment. Today rehabs and medical Drs are using mental health medication for the treatment of addiction. They

prescribe these psychotropics medication to treat anxiety and depression. They're designed, and use is to help with recovery. In NA we use the Steps to treat addiction, and it works. Substituting one drug for another is using and releases our addiction all over again. Therefore, at that point you're not Clean. Total and Complete Abstinence has to be achieved in the First Step, then after we're Clean, we can approach the Second Step. You cannot work any Step under the influence of drugs. Newcomers on drugs will argue this point because they still haven't Surrendered to a life without the use of drugs. They still want to keep using drugs and find a loop hole in the Program to say they're Clean. Others say that as long as it is prescribed by a doctor it's ok. Our Literature tells us that our Recovery is our responsibility. Some of our Literature tells us that doctors enabled our addiction by giving us drugs. It goes on to say that these methods failed us or held no answers that we can use. The Second Step and many other quotes in our Literature talks about being Clean in order for the Program to work. You cannot carry a NA message if you're not Clean. Therefore, it means you're still using drugs/medicine to Recover. It can't be done. An addict on MAT who gets angry or upset when they're told they're not Clean probably lacks the Humility or Surrender it takes to benefit from the NA Program. Today we don't have to use, no matter what reason. Anonymous Member

**From NY USA**





## The Games We Play

I'm not talking about no video game or board game. I'm talking about those games that our addiction wants us to play to let itself back into our lives. I from my experience have played these mind games with my addiction when I have an event that is happening or will never happening that I dwell on so much that I start doing my will and thinking about how I can control the event or the outcome so it the way I want it to happen. When I start getting into my head and listen to or feed into my addictive thinking. I stop praying and meditating to my God asking him for help to get me through the event that I am dwelling on. I also stop trying to do God's will and practicing spiritual principles and start acting like I am my God and start doing the things that are the center of my disease like being willful, selfish, self-centered, controlling, fearful, hopeless and negative. Then once the event has happened and it didn't play out the way I was playing it out in my head. The relationship with my God suffers because I end up thinking that he wasn't there for me or he won't have done that to me. The acceptance of life on life's terms doesn't happen because of how things didn't play out in my favor. Then I have also ended up building a resentment towards my God and those people, places and things that I thought were involved with the event because I think that they are to blame for the event not happening the way I wanted it to be.

I have noticed through my recovery so far that the only way I can win these games in my head is to get out of my head. I do this by writing about these events in my daily surrender. Once I wrote on the event in my daily surrender it makes it easier for me to see things that this event may bring and see them as what they are and what my parts are in the event. Which lets me accept the event and dealing life on life's terms a lot easier. Which lets me pray and meditate to my God more clearly for help to deal with the event and helps me to see his will for me and my feelings that this event has brought on

**Written By: An Anonymous Addict**



**From: Nebraska USA**

*Many of us have said:*

*"Take my will and my life,*

*Guide me in my Recovery),*

*show me how to live."*

## Playmates, Play Toys, Play Places

Many of us come into NA feeling alone and left apart from. One of the first things we hear is that we need to change our playmates, play places and play toys or some version of this saying. It truly is sad how many times I have seen addicts go out time and time again because they thought that they didn't need to follow this suggestion. When I finally Surrendered, I knew that I couldn't hang around old using friends even if they didn't use around me. I knew this because I didn't listen and went out and researched if it was possible. I got the inevitable haircut that many warn about when you go to the barber shop. So instead my disease took me to finding new play places and play toys that didn't help my recovery but rather put me in danger. I went places that did not fill my spirit but rather filled my self-centered disease. Thank God that I never used over this, but I also learned some very valuable lessons from those years. Today I have to live with the knowledge that I had a part in many going back out. Hindsight is 20/20 as many in recovery warned me taking newcomers into places such as the strip clubs, casinos, etc. we're not going to keep them clean. I always made the excuse that they have a choice and I had a rule that if I had the first thought of using, I would leave. I left several times. Looking back, I am very Grateful that I didn't use but I know how stupid it was of me to go to those places. I am very

Grateful that a couple years ago God showed me I had no place going into the last of those places I still went to. I was still going to the casinos and I started obsessing over going despite having told myself I wasn't going to go into the casinos anymore. I drove around the block twice and then decided to go in. I parked my car and got out. My Sponsor at that time did not call me at night. I walked into the door and my phone rang. It was my Sponsor. Right then and there it was as if I was hit with the sign telling me I had to change, or I would lose everything. Since then my life and this deeper level of Surrender has really changed my life and given me more freedom than I ever thought possible. I became more a part of in NA and truly have found that I truly am not alone. Sure, I knew that before, but I never had addressed the issues of why I kept living in the insanity. I hope this experience helps others to not have the guilt and shame of knowing there are addicts out there that I had a part in them making poor choices and they may die from the disease of addiction because of my self-centeredness. We must change our playmates, play places and play toys. I felt like needed to share this today. Love you all.

**Written by Anonymous Addict**



## NA or Not

I am an NA Purist and make no apology. I mean really, there is nothing for which a purist need apologize. All we want to be able to do is let the still suffering addict know that by living the NA way they can stop using, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. Many among our ranks are seen as militants and labeled 'Nazis' or 'NA Police', likely because when we take a stance in defense of our Traditions we mostly do so at the expense of some addict's ego. Not a one of us starts out willing to be told we're wrong and most of us never really grow to like it. When we point out a violation of our Traditions or cry out in agony over the bastardization of the language of our message, the passion a purist feels for our fellowship often gets delivered with a punch born out of the threat we feel to our beloved way of life. I'd like to believe that it is never intended as a weapon against the individuals or groups that we hope to inform and educate. Perhaps the newer members of our ranks do not yet understand all of the principles behind their love for NA and only feel and act with the fervor that has been ignited. That might explain some of the apparent clash. I cannot speak nor apologize for any individual human being. Nor would I want to. I only want to help others understand our view. We, as a movement, do not hate AA, or any other group of folks trying to help their respective suffering. We, as a movement, do not hate religion or deities or church. We, as a movement do not hate the

practice of medicine nor psychiatry. Our message as purists is not that these should not be shunned, scorned or spurned. Our message is simply that Narcotics Anonymous works. This Program is sufficient to the needs of an addict, any addict, without regard to choose of drug(s) used. We do not say "alcohol" (or any other drug name) or "sober" (or any other language besides our own) ONLY out of respect for ourselves, not out of disrespect for others. For decades I've heard our detractors chastise our ideals by pointing to the debt of gratitude we owe to AA for showing the way and allowing us to adapt our Steps from theirs. What I have always wanted to ask these people is this: "What exactly do you think we owe them? I mean how should we pay this debt? By bowing to them and living in their shadow in perpetuity?" I submit that the best, nay the ONLY way we can pay this debt is to become (we already did) and REMAIN a distinct fellowship and Program of recovery in our own right. AA fully supports this in that they need to address the single issue of alcoholism and to help only the alcoholic. We can be of utmost service to AA by addressing the single issue of addiction and helping only the still suffering addict. We need not, and CAN not do anything else. We can pay our debt by being pure.

### By Anonymous Addict USA



might feel as a contradiction. Why does our Second Tradition mention leaders if we don't have any? A leader in Narcotics Anonymous is not practicing the kind of leadership we see in the outside world. Our Second Tradition defines our leaders roll, they are actually not leaders, they are trusted servants. The do not lead, they serve the Group. If they would lead, they have ended their spiritual assignment, to serve. We rotate our trusted servants. There is no cast system in Narcotics Anonymous. We all serve each other. We walk side by side along the spiritual path of recovery.

### Requirements

Our Traditions tell us there is only one requirement to be a member in NA: the desire to stop using drugs.

Our meetings are a place where every drug addict can come to no matter what drugs they use, race they are, age they are, religious beliefs they have, sexuality they have, etc. As soon as we demand addicts to fit certain requirements to attend a meeting or become part of a group, we violate their anonymity and our Traditions. This tears us apart and creates disunity in our fellowship.

We do have one requirement, and many don't take this seriously. If we ignore that we must have the desire to stop using in order to be a member then we cause disunity. This also goes along with our foundation of complete abstinence from all drugs. Many come in and have the desire to get off street drugs but think it is ok to use prescribed drugs. Our bodies do not know the difference. A drug

is a drug and we must abstain from all drugs in order to recover. If we change this requirement for addicts to please those that don't meet the only requirement then we cause disunity in the Fellowship of NA.

### Personalities

We came into our Fellowship with broken and twisted personalities. We were self-obsessed and full of self-hatred, not a very healthy combination. By living in our spiritual program and by applying spiritual principles before ego we slowly change our attitude and ideas about ourselves and others. We need to continue to take personal responsibility and inventory to be able to place principles before personalities. In our Group setting it's not our personalities that matter, what matters is our common bonds of addiction, and more importantly our mutual bonds of recovery. There is no room for the self in spiritual gathering. Once again, by practicing anonymity the "I" becomes the "We". We recover! Spiritual principles are never in conflict, personalities usually are.

## WE NEED MORE INPUT

Input and review material only send input to A.S.I.S. for NA- NA Home Groups  
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Our Traditions warns us about what ties that would tear us apart:

- Disunity
- Leadership
- Personalities
- Requirements
- Professionalism
- Governing Ego
- Money, property and prestige
- Outside contributions
- Endorsement
- Loans
- Organization
- Opinions
- Public controversy
- Promotion

How do we as Home Groups prevent this from happening? We look to our traditions for absolute guidance and we learn by applying them, not changing them to accommodate our selfish needs.

### Disunity

Our First Tradition talks about Unity, the opposite of Disunity. We create Unity by setting the spiritual welfare of the Group first, not our personal opinions, egos and strong personalities. We do this by listening for God's will for our group purposes. For doing this we need to mature spiritually, we need to develop a personal relationship with a God of our own understanding and keep doing spiritual maintenance on a daily basis. We listen for God's will and look to our Traditions in our Group Conscience. We place princi-

ples (our traditions) before personalities. We are all equal in Narcotics Anonymous, the bonds of anonymity keep's us from separating and creates unity.

In Groups disagreements and conflict can exist. We need to remember that our lives are on the line and being a part of the group is important. We need to remember why we are here and become willing to practice listening, tolerance and patience with each other. What is our primary purpose and how as a group are, we fulfilling that? Most of the times when conflicts exist in a Group it means we are not practicing the principles of the Traditions. We need to do a Group inventory on the Traditions, so we can find Unity again in our purpose of being here together. Sometimes we are violating Traditions, sometimes there are elephants in the rooms that need to be discussed, sometimes the atmosphere of recovery is in danger because of personalities, behavior or other things. Taking the time to sit down together, pray, read and talk and take enough time to do this is the beginning of unity again. Our First Tradition talks about Unity, the opposite of Disunity. We create Unity by setting the spiritual welfare of the Group first, not our personal opinions, egos and strong

### Leadership

The opposite to leadership is our Group conscience, that we're working and recovering together. We are a WE program in every sense of the word. We have no leaders; our leaders are but trusted servants. This

## Regardless of the Twelfth Tradition

Regardless of the Twelfth Traditions, there are still some big personalities in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

[You know who they are.]

They love to be the center of attention at every meeting and function they go to and have their little entourage of recovering addicts who follow them wherever they go. And, unfortunately, sometimes these "personalities" go back out, as any of us are susceptible to if we don't do what we have to for our recovery. But when these people go back out, they leave a lot of bewildered recovering addicts stumbling around, wondering what went wrong.

[How did this great recovery giant go back out?]

[How can that be possible?]

Well, I can go back out very easily, if my program is built on reputation without character. Let me explain. If I have a strong, likable personality and the gift of gab, then I can become very popular at a lot of the NA meetings and functions I go to. Add to that a few years under my belt, and I can gain quite a reputation with those who are misinformed about the Traditions.

The truth is, reputation is fleeting. That's because it is nothing more than how others perceive me. And if anything occurs that causes them to change their perception of me, then my reputation is changed forever, and possibly at the cost of my recovery.

[So how can I insure that I won't fall victim to the "reputation curse"?]

By making sure I have something that's even more important than a good reputation, and that is character. Don't get so caught up in my image - or how others see me - that I forget who I really am or wish to be. Character comes from practicing the principles of this program in all my affairs, from living the life expected of a recovering addict. Practice honesty. An honest person has nothing to lose because there are no lies or false facades to protect.

[Have integrity.]

If you always do the right thing for the right reasons, others will trust you and have faith in you.

[Learn anonymity.]

Remember that the most important person in NA is the one just walking in the door, and that the rest of us are here to serve, not to be catered to.

Protect the recovery of others as much as you do your own and you will find friends who will stick with you even in the toughest times. So, work on building your character instead of a reputation. A true reputation will follow on its own, and it will endure a lot longer.

"We keep what we have only with vigilance ..."

**From an anonymous member...**



## Steps 4, 5 and 6

Last issue we did the foundation steps 1, 2 and 3. This issue we are beginning the first half of the cleansing steps 4, 5 and 6. Last issue I said the first three steps will keep you clean for a while. Without moving forward through the steps, a relapsed can become a reality. Steps 4 through 9 will keep us clean emotionally, mentally and spiritually. However, as we said last issue it is not okay to be physically clean and spiritually dirty.

### Step Four: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We do this step to find out who we really are. Many people approach this step as if it was a confession or a history of their life. Although part of that is true however it goes much deeper than that surface stuff. Part of the fourth step is to look at our moral values in our addiction and also to look at them in our recovery today.

Before we start, we must acquire The Guide to the Fourth Step in NA which is a current NA publication It can be found at [www.nahelp.org](http://www.nahelp.org)

The guide will start by telling you to rewrite the first three steps. You will go over those steps again with your sponsor at the beginning of the fourth step. After that the guide will tell you to proceed to a number of topics to write on such as relationships and resentments. As I said earlier you are not to write your history or make this a confession. On each one of the topics you are to write

your moral inventory and history during your addiction to the best of your memory, and then on how you felt about it at the time it was happening. Next write about the same things but how you feel about those things today. This will allow your sponsor to know where you were in your addiction and by writing in the present it will allow your sponsor to know where you are today. It will also you make you aware of your growth in recovery. This is important because many times others see our growth and we don't.

It is important that you be 100% honest in your writing. If you are not, the only person that will be hurt is yourself. If you can't be honest in the fourth step it will not benefit you.

There is no rush to complete the fourth step however you must communicate with your sponsor to determine whether you are procrastinating or just stuck. During the fourth step there may be times that you may feel uncomfortable and may even have thoughts of using, that is normal. When that happens call your support group and your sponsor immediately. They will assure you that those feelings are normal, and you don't have to use. When you're fourth step is finished call your sponsor and make an appointment to do the fifth step.

**The Fifth step: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.** The fifth step is the key to freedom. The first thing that must be understood is that your sponsor has probably heard everything

*Do not Follow me, learn with me, do not put me on a perch where I cannot be one of you.*  
*Let me be just another addict learning how to follow these Principles.*  
*Let me walk aside you, not in front or behind you.*  
*Let me just be another addict in recovery.*

Written by Anonymous

### “Stronger than those that would tear us apart”

NA is based on spiritual principles that all are based off of Anonymity. Some have tried to say our Tradition says we have leaders because it says, “our leaders” before “are but trusted servants they do not govern”. They also have coined phrases such as effective leadership is highly valued in NA. So why wouldn't many get the wrong idea regarding leadership in NA. Our dis-ease is ego based that wants to think that we can do everything instead of turning things over to a loving, caring God as expressed in Group Conscience. Some would ask how can leadership hurt? We need to get to where we want correct? That is correct, but this is the difference between a spiritual program and a self-help program. We need each other, and leadership implies that it

is the individuals that lead others to the right way. In NA each of us are seeking a spiritual awakening. For one individual that may be different than another individual. It also means we are leading rather than Surrendering to a Greater Power. It puts some addicts above others and lots of addict's struggle with authority when we come into the rooms of NA. Many of us think outside the box and need creative freedom to help us grow. Leadership doesn't let us work together but instead it has one leading the others. How can we be a part of if we are leading or if we feel we are not good enough to participate. Leadership has helped many feel services is not exciting. It has stolen the fun out of being a part of something and the awakening of seeing we have something to give from the first day we walk into the rooms of NA. One of the best gifts of recovery some of us have watched is seeing a newcomer help write literature in the open participation process from the first day they walk into the rooms. Some leaders have said addicts can't write and instead of encouraging others to truly serve and see the fullness of recovery have helped create an apathy that has invaded our program. Our Traditions are to protect ourselves from ourselves how can we do that if we are in charge and don't let go of see. We listen for God's will and look to our Traditions in our Group Conscience. We place principles (our traditions) before personalities. We are all equal in Narcotics Anonymous, the bonds of anonymity keep's us from separating and creates unity.

traditions say on this?

“Our disease does not recognize race, religion, sex, age, occupation, economics, or any other lines that people draw to separate themselves.” (Grey Book, p. 97, l. 26-29) If we are truly in N.A. to fight our disease how can there be a need to separate ourselves from other addicts? Why would we not be able to share what we need regardless of the sex of the people around us if we use the N.A. way and look at the similarities rather than separating ourselves from one another. Many will use the argument of “there is other meetings or groups”, and this may be true but since we all have the primary purpose to carry the message to the addict that still suffers is it then a good idea to imply that not all addicts are welcomed. This is all a way to separate one addict from another. In N.A. we are all addicts and everything else should be left outside our doors. We have one primary purpose and we have the way to ensure this happens, as stated in our first tradition; “Our purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. We have our Traditions, the rules that protect us from ourselves.” (Grey Book, p. 92, l. 28-30)

“Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs in one form or another had become a major problem.” (Grey Book, p. 16 l. 35-36) This is the core of N.A. and the anonymity that is needed to keep our fellowship strong and pure. We are addicts and in N.A. that is all we are. “In order to survive, we must set aside the difference we live by and become part of a greater

whole.” (Grey Book, p. 115, l. 14-16) So, to survive we need the group and for the group to survive we need our traditions. These meetings are the result of groups deciding to start them or members starting their own groups and; “We’ve made a lot of bad decisions and pawned them off as Groups conscience.” (Grey Book, p. 94, l. 14-15) The early members of N.A. have seen this happen and tells us of groups that have separated themselves by giving instructions on who may join and they also give us a solution to this; “Then we review our decisions to make sure they are not in violation of any of our Twelve Traditions.” (Grey Book, p. 94, l. 25-25) We need all of the Traditions to make sure we protect the group from ourselves and if we don’t the group may not survive.

“Without the principle of anonymity, each group would set itself up as something different from the rest, something special.” (Grey Book, p. 116, l. 14-16) The principle of anonymity is the foundation of all our traditions and this means in N.A. we are addicts. We are nothing else in the rooms and when we follow the traditions and practice the principle of anonymity, we never need to feel like we don’t belong, we never need to feel unsafe due to our past and we can recover as a part of the whole.

**From an anonymous member**



that you are going to share before and also has probably done almost everything that you have. With that knowledge alone should take away your fear. Many addicts believe that they should just read their fourth step to their Sponsors. That is not true for several reasons. First just reading it does not get to the exact nature of the wrongs. The writing of the fourth step was to introduce you to you. The writing was for you to loosen all the baggage inside of you. Now that that baggage is loosened its time to get to the exact nature. You have your fourth step there to glance at and refer to it. For instance, let’s say you are suffering from jealousy. Jealousy is not the exact nature but a symptom of a deeper cause. (The Exact Nature) So how do we get to the exact nature? Simply by looking at our writings and allow ourselves to share from deep within all the feelings associated with what we have written. For instance, the jealousy may come from a deep feeling of insecurity. You may not feel worthy of anybody loving you and your fear of losing that love. That would be the exact nature of jealousy. The jealousy will not subside until you work on the insecurity under the guidance of your sponsor. You continue throughout the fifth step identifying, the exact nature of your wrongs. When your sponsor is satisfied with your fifth step your sponsor will move you on to the sixth step.

**Sixth Step: We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

Willingness is what we are striving

for in this step. With the knowledge that you gained from doing a fifth step you are ready to begin your sixth step. Many years ago, it was customary to burn your fourth step however today many addicts believe you should keep it as a reference when doing steps six through nine. However, you should follow the guidance of your sponsor in this matter because that is the person that you have put your trust in.

Now this step does not say that God removes these defects of character but says you became entirely ready to allow the God of your understanding to do this. In other words, this is another surrender step. Is there a difference between our defects and our shortcomings? Although they are similar there is a difference. Our defects are part of us, like part of our character. Our shortcomings are the acting out of the defects. If we don’t act out on the shortcoming then the defect is arrested. I like to look at the sixth step that it is like packing a suitcase and the seventh step is taking the trip. Many addicts find themselves confused between the sixth and seventh step. That is the difference. Hope this clears it up.

Years ago, my sponsor told me that we were entirely ready when we take action. The action he told me to do was to take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the center of it. On the left side of the line he asked me to list my defects and number them in priority order. On the right side of the line list their opposites. For instance, the defect is being judgmental - open-minded

edness is it opposite. By doing the list you are telling your sponsor that you are entirely ready to allow God to remove your defects of character. The sheet of paper then becomes your road map for recovery. The seventh step is where they are removed.

Next Issue we will talk about the process of God removing the defects by humbly asking him to remove our shortcomings. At that time, we will continue the journey of the steps with 7, 8 and 9.

### Written by An Anonymous Addict from the USA



## How Anonymi was Born

I remember sitting on the floor of the house of the rising sun in Marietta Ga with Gina Helguerra and MC Ed in the spring of 1981, We were talking about autonomy of a Fellowship...our Fellowship the one we'd committed our lives and recoveries and service to. We were talking about the autonomy of primary purpose, the difference of philosophy, between ours and the other (much larger & more accepted one). We were regretful that many of the 'leaders', the old timers, those involved in vast worldwide service to this fledgling Fellowship seemed so

very determined to keep it a fledgling Fellowship. We noticed that they seemed to think that our program was just a back door into the real thing. They introduced themselves as Addict/Alcoholics and took every opportunity to tell new folks about the Other Fellowship of which they were also members... But we were sharing with each other a new vision... Autonomy of a fellowship, dedication to the truth of powerlessness over the problem exclusive of the symptom. We were talking about a Narcotics Anonymous that didn't exist yet. We'd met each other involved in the 'Literature Movement', we helped each other recover more fully, we 'called' each other on the lies that were so very intertwined into our recovery philosophy, by necessity because before we'd met each other we each were the only one (or one of the very few) who believed that NA was something different and special and true. After we'd met each other it could never be the same -we weren't alone anymore, as we'd been before alone amidst a world of treatment-acceptable Addict/Alcoholics We formed a group. We called that group Anonymi. We met and helped the book and the 1st 13 pamphlets and Narcotics Anonymous itself get a foothold in autonomy. We still meet-and you're probably part of us. If you refused to compromise the 12 Traditions for any expedient concept, if you seek the truth. If it will never be the same for you because of what you believe, and who you met in service... real service

### Anonymi.



## Anonymity in relations to gender specific meetings, events and groups.

"Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs in one form or another had become a major problem." (Grey Book, p. 16 l. 35-36) This is one of the lines that most addicts learn as they start coming to Narcotics Anonymous. This is something most addicts think is obvious, and for most it is. The question that we have to ask is what happens to this when we have gender specific meetings, events and groups? Are we then men and women or just one or the other?

The history behind writing this article is because the last year an ALL WOMENS group have started in the name of N.A. in one of the larger

cities here in Sweden, they use the argument that women need a safe place where they are not objectified by men and many of these women have been in abusive relationships all throughout their lives. This is also the argument for having women's only meetings. This is similar to the argument for all men's meetings, they need a safe haven from women and all that comes with having to share around the other sex. On the meeting list these meetings are listed as "foremost for women/men". This implies that only one sex should come. There is other specific meetings as well directed at those that have a different sexual orientation. There is also some who say that we cannot share what we want on the "regular" meetings since some stuff is to "feminine" or "masculine" to be shared in a meeting with both sexes. So how does this relate to the anonymity of N.A. and what does our



# *God Grant Us the Serenity To accept the things, we cannot change The Courage To change the Things, we can And the Wisdom to know the difference*

As I think of this prayer, the first thing that comes to mind is that the word Grant and what it means to me. Grant is something that has been given, however it is not without responsibility. When God grants us Serenity, he has given us responsibility on how to attain it.

## **So now what is serenity?**

It is God peace of mind and how do we receive it that peace of mind is through work and applying surrender that we need help in our recovery. It starts with the first step. Identifying that we have a disease of the body, mind, spirit and emotions. Through this process of surrender and we are able to except ourselves for who we truly are instead of the person we have deceived ourselves in believing who we were. Surrender is the key to acceptance, so we can receive serenity that the steps give us. To Except is to surrender is what we need in the first step to move on to receive God Courage

## **What is God Courage?**

God Courage is his strength, so we can move forward in seeing ourselves who truly we are without weakness that drives in a corner we cannot get out of clean. When we can identify the insanity that has controlled our lives for so many

years we are able to surrender to a greater power who can that can get us to stop trying to change others that we have blamed for our past and we can now start the process of hanging ourselves and the effects we have had upon are on lives .

## **God Wisdom?**

God gives us his knowledge in being able to stop trying to change others, so we can feel better. We are able to see that others do not have the ability to control our emotional self. That we through surrender in the third step now are empowered with God's with God Knowledge to move on to the Fourth Step and do a first honest appraisal of ourselves. To see are pattern of our life that triggered our past reactions to others and now can except ourselves for who we truly are. Instead of trying to change the world around us. We start to have the ability to change our reaction to the world by changing ourselves into a spiritual being instead.

Thank God through this prayer I have been able to practice the short version of the first three steps in my life. Now I can move forward into the rest of the steps without Fear.

**In Loving Service  
Anonymous Addict:  
from the USA**



## **Old Ghost in The Closet**

Do you sometimes sit back and remember things you had put away? Things you externally don't want to remember. Things you put away when the drugs hit in. Well you're not alone. We all deal with those fears. Facing ourselves is scary and we shouldn't do it alone. We now have a program and a loving God as we understood Him. We have friends in N.A. who love us, especially because of these old ghosts in the closet. They used to have the same type of ghosts and discovered that only God is capable of being a ghost buster. We need a daily program to learn to deal with those trials of life. Only then we might have a chance. Only then we might let God be a ghost buster.

Those ghosts are what keeps us back, keeps us from spiritual growth. It's fears, fears that the ghosts will destroy us if we share them. But the result is the opposite, if we aren't honest with our ghosts, we destroy ourselves. To be dishonest doesn't mean that we have to lie in words, we can be dishonest by our actions and by not saying anything at all to. We can't choose the things we want to be honest about, we need complete honesty in order to recover, we can't carry the ghosts alone. If we do, we have reservations, that means we have something we aren't willing to do for us to stay clean and recover. When we share our ghosts and surrender to our past, we allow God to heal us and guide us in those areas.

We realize that we aren't alone with having them, other people do to. We are never alone, even in those areas we really believe that no one could have experienced this, but they have. There's completely nothing we can do to change the past, but God and NA help us to not be controlled by it, if we do the work necessary.

**Written by An Anonymous Addicts  
From Sweden & Holland**



## The Traditions:

### A Common Theme of One

- We are **one** in unity
- We become **one** in group conscience
- We have **one** requirement
- We have the freedom of **one**
- We have **one** purpose **one** message
- We ensure our **one** ness (we never endorse ,finance, or lend)
- We are supported by **one** thing only, ourselves
- We are equal and **one** in the same, as non-professionals
- We stay **one** by not separating with organization
- We have **one** opinion on outside issues(nocomment)
- By setting aside our name, in public We remain part of the **one** ,anonymously.
- We set aside our differences and become **one**

Anonymous member  
Philadelphia PA



## Being a part of life.

As long as I can remember I have felt like an outsider looking in. My parents tried to get me involved in sports, but I always felt apart from the others, either I wasn't good enough or the greatest ever, never felt as an equal. In school I was desperately looking for my crowd, but I had a hard time fitting in anywhere. I was very scared of people in general, but I had such an urge to feel liked and part of something bigger than me. To find a place where I could feel safe and where I could express my whole being.

When I found drugs, I instantly felt whole, like I was complete and that the ones I used with understood me. The "I" got high, but I also felt like I became a part of a "We". We felt like we had now found the "magic potion" and that everyone else was missing out. I remember older addicts telling me about life and all its mystery's and I was listening intensely. I felt like they had the answer to all my problems, I felt like they really understood me. As any "responsible adult" they told me which drugs and what people to stay away from. I felt like I had come home, that this was my tribe.

Things changed quickly.

I started to experience violence, overdoses, back stabbing and desperation. The We got scattered into smaller groups. Now I was on my drug of choice and me and my new "tribe" was looking down on all the other addicts and society as a whole. We couldn't afford to trust any-

one, we sure didn't trust each other either. The We decreased even more from more lethal overdoses and jail sentences. I found myself feeling all alone again. In my desperate attempt to feel a part of I had managed to scare away everyone I loved. The drug that had promised me courage and power was now draining me from life itself. I was alone with my addiction.

When I surrendered to our spiritual program, I couldn't even imagine all that was to come. I just wanted to get off drugs, that's why I first surrendered.

I was blessed with a powerful, intense, and somewhat dramatic spiritual awakening. "Something" spoke to me, through my heart, that you don't need to be afraid anymore, you are not alone ever again. I knew where to turn. my real tribe was waiting for me. When I came to Narcotics Anonymous, I had truly found my way home, "old timers" where telling me what to watch out for and where to stay away from, I just needed to be willing to try. When I was guided to the Home Group, I belong to the feeling of being a part of something greater grew immensely. We are translating, writing, doing PI and are fully autonomous. We are a part of a structure that's instructed and directed by the home groups. We focus on our primary purpose, to help more suffering "I's" to become a part of the spiritual "We". Everything I looked for in my using I have found in Narcotics Anonymous, multiplied with 24.

**Anonymous and grateful  
From Sweden**





# POSTER



Get ONBOARD

the RECOVERY

TRAIN

Choo choo!!

AMR'S