

*Your Fellowship Magazine
Share... and be shared with..*

*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
NA
WAY

“ ... so that no addict seeking recovery need ever die...”
We publish your input -- the opinions presented are not necessarily
those of the New/Old NA Way or Anonymi Foundation

The New/Old
NA Way

VOLUME 34
August - September 2020



The New/Old NA WAY Magazine

Volume 34

August 2020 - September 2020

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

**GET
INVOLVED!**

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Please send your articles, event information, comics or other input to nahelp.org@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

FELLOWSHIP LITERATURE CONFERENCE

Date: September 4th thru September 8th, 2020
110 Buttersworths Bogs Rd, Tabernacle NJ, 08088

5TH ANNUAL EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIP SERVICE CONFERENCE FOR N.A.

Date: September 17th thru September 21th, 2020
Ambt Delden, The Netherlands

ANNUAL 12 STEP RETREAT

Date: February 19th thru February 21st, 2021
Columbiana, Ohio
Your event here? Send information to nahelp.org@gmail.com

16TH ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP SERVICE CONFERENCE FOR N.A.

Date: June 26th thru June 28th, 2020
Hamburg, PA

Weblinks

www.nahelp.org

Contact: nahelp.org@gmail.com
World

www.nahelp.nl

Contact: nahelp.nl@gmail.com
The Netherlands

www.freerecovery.org.uk

United Kingdom

The New/Old NA Way

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16th Annual Fellowship Service Conference for N.A.

When: June 25th thru June 27th, 2021

Where: Hamburg, PA **Place:**

Olivet Mountain Camp

1540 Mountain Ave.
Hamburg, Pa 19526

Cost: \$105.00 per person

Price includes all meals and (lodging if needed)
There is no registration fee all money goes directly to pay for the facility and food
Write checks payable to Historical Perspective Group for NA

My Gratitude Speaks When I Care And When I Share With Others The NA Way

Projected Agenda: How to get involved: Projected Agenda: Annual Conference Serving NA Home Groups through Group Conscience and Setting up services directly accountable to the groups through the Traditions. {Anonymi Foundation / A.S.I.S. for N.A.} **The Facility has asked us to Not Arrive before 4PM Registration starts at 4:30pm**

For More Information: Contact Historical Perspective Group (610) 428-9923 Ask for Ray: or e-mail – matrxmatclub@yahoo.com – Check Out Are Web - Page www.nahelp.org/ Send check to: A.S.I.S. for NA P.O. Box 4404 Allentown, Pa 18105 Write checks payable to **Historical Perspective Group of NA** (Bring sheets, pillows, Towels and soap everything else provided)

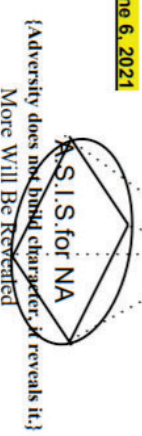
Name: _____ E – Mail: _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone () _____ Group: _____

Check No. _____ Amount **\$105.00** _____

Send Check by June 6, 2021

**S.I.S. for NA**
{Adversity does not build character, it reveals it;}
More Will Be Revealed

The Groups of Northern Columbiana County Area of Narcotics Anonymous present...

Annual 12 Step Retreat

February 19, 20, 21, 2021

Das [Dutch Village Inn](#)
150 East state Route 14
Columbiana, Ohio 44408

What to expect: Speakers, Discussion, Coffee,
Real NA Old School Recovery!

only \$5.00 for the weekend if you pre-register - \$10.00 at the door

Pre-Register by Emailing stepretreat@yahoo.com

NO addict EVER turned away!

Rooms start at \$94 per night for 2 adults
(\$10.00 additional for each adult)

Prices are subject to change

Reserve your room by January 1, 2020 mention you are with the
NA retreat to get the discounted price

Call Hotel @ 330-4825050

It is a gift!

I've been hanging around the fellowship for a long time - I wanted absence of pain, not a new way to live. I think that shows by the way I lived my life. Medicated, trying not to feel, trying to find what I thought was the easier way (in retrospect). The 3rd tradition states that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Well, I did not meet the requirements for over 24 years, because I still wanted to use anything to change the way I felt. I just knew that the street drugs I was using were going to kill me. But I did not want to stop trying to find another hit. Whether it be a person, place or thing or medication (drugs!) ... Now I have the desire to not use and I have found a new way to live. The more I live this way, the more I want to live this way. I may have finally surrendered. But it's a choice I make every day because I only keep what I have with vigilance. I do not know what each day will hold because I do not use to try to control my feelings anymore. And that is a gift!

**Written by An Anonymous
Addict From: Kentucky USA**

From Open to Closed

Now that I have experienced what closed NA meetings that apply the 12 Traditions are like, normal NA meet-

ings will never be the same. For a long time, I have not felt at home in open NA meetings. It sounds insane to say that an NA member does not feel at home in NA meetings. It seems that every message is accepted except the message of Narcotics Anonymous. To go from meetings that are open and open topic to closed meetings that study the Gray Book paragraph by paragraph is a huge leap. I can identify with the literature written by addicts for addicts and the meetings stay focused on recovery. I've been in a lot of open meetings that have gotten so off topic that I've left.

I believe a lot of good has come out of the stay at home order for Narcotics Anonymous. I think this is especially true for the Traditionalist movement. More and more addicts are being exposed to the Gray Book and closed NA meetings. I have seen members who had no clue that the Gray Book even existed be confused and almost upset because everything they thought that they knew about this program was being challenged. I have seen these members stay for a closed Gray Book study, say that they have never felt so spiritually fed. These members have shown so much gratitude towards the Home Group and keep coming back week after week. I believe this Spiritual Program becomes reality when our Groups apply the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

It will be interesting to see what happens as our world comes back

from quarantine, I know my recovery will never be the same. I asked someone to sponsor me that I never would have met if it wasn't for the digital meetings. I don't think Narcotics Anonymous will ever be the same either. Hopefully more people are waking up to our history and the truth about this program.

Written by An Anonymous Addict From Ohio USA

This an update from the Äntligen Fria (Finally Free) Home Group in Sweden.

We are currently having four meetings per week (soon five). We have about five members. We are doing H&L twice a week. We are going over our translation of the Baby Blue every Thursday. We are going over the translation/interpretation of the Grey Book every Friday (starting 12th of June). We have been a part of A.S.I.S about three years. We have given away over 100 Swedish Baby Blues (maybe more, just an estimate).

There's probably a lot more, but I'm at work so I need to get going. What are all the other Home Groups up to?

In Service

Home Group Report Update

Sweden

The Finally Free Home Group will open another meeting the 12th of June.

Time: 18.00-19.30 cet

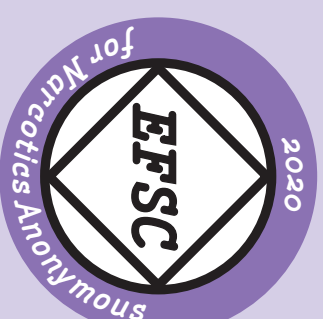
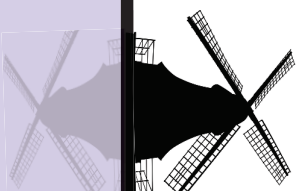
Place: Hotellgatan 36 bottom floor

Format: Closed Swedish Grey Book study meeting

Phone number: +46 70 522 53 07



17th - 20th September
2020



Location:

Krooze Danne, Kappelhofsweg 14
Ambt Delden, the Netherlands

Price: € 125,- (All-Inclusive)
Possible to pay in terms

Register at www.nahelp.nl
or email to nahelp.nl@gmail.com

Contact: 0031642091629

The Concepts Deconstruction

If we do not rescind or rewrite the Concepts immediately, the Fellowship will one day take them seriously by default

-A former trustee warning the Fellowship that they had better take world and the Concepts seriously and warning of a future we are now living.

1. *To fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.*

When did your Group vote on this? The vast majority of NA Groups were not in existence when the Concepts were "adopted" by the WSC (not by the Fellowship as the Fellowship did not take them seriously at that time). Even if the Groups had legitimately adopted them, what Traditions gave the Groups at the time the right to delegate away the authority and right to administer services of all future Groups? Who decided the phrase "may create" in Tradition Nine was no longer valid. According to this Concept, as far as NA as a whole is concerned it appears as though Groups "must subscribe to" an preordained service structure rather than having the ability to create or subscribe to services of their choos-

ing. According to Tradition Four Groups should consult one another in matters affecting other Groups or NA as a whole. There is no "majority rule" mechanism in this Tradition and, in fact, services below the Group level are not even mentioned until Tradition Nine. Tradition Two mandates God direct NA at the Group level. Tradition Four guarantees Group autonomy and makes Groups responsible for driving all things NA with a mandate to consult with one another and not speak for each other. Developing a service structure that acts on behalf of NA as a whole goes well beyond the mandate of the Groups and delegated authority to a structure which is to be directly responsible to the Groups (should they choose to create or participate in such a structure at all). Tradition Five makes clear that Groups are responsible for carrying the message. According to Tradition Nine the purpose of any service board, committee (or structure) is to take direction from the Groups. This Concept creates a service body which acts independently "on behalf of" the Groups. Even the 1989 ADHOC Committee on Service Structure report to WSC in 1989 (which introduced the Concepts) admits this. That report states that without the Concepts services are only able to respond to the immediate needs of the Fellowship and cannot look ahead and develop their own agendas. No kidding?! That's all services are supposed to do respond to the

FELLOWSHIP LITERATURE CONFERENCE

September 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th 2020



Open Participatory Literature Writing Conference Literature Written by Addicts for Addicts!

110 Buttersworths Bogs Rd, Tabernacle NJ, 08088

Cost: \$125 per Person

Price includes meals and lodging.

There is no registration fee all money goes directly to pay for the facility and food.

Write checks payable to Historical Perspective Group

For More Information: Contact Historical Perspective Group - Literature Coordinator -

Bill A. (484) 951-3305; or e-mail — matrixmatclub@yahoo.com

Check Out Our Web www.nahelp.org/ Send check to: A.S.I.S. For NA

P.O. Box 4404 Allentown, Pa 18105 Write checks payable to

Historical Perspective Group of NA

(Bring sheets, pillows, towels, and soap. Everything else provided)

Name: _____ E - Mail: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone Number (____) _____

Group Name _____ Register by August 21, 2020

Amount \$125.00 Check NO. _____

immediate needs and directives of the Groups they serve!

2. *The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.*

The primary purpose of the GROUPS is to carry the message. Groups do not have final authority for NA services, they have PRIMARY authority, according to Tradition Five. Tradition Two makes clear that "ultimate authority" for all things NA is a Loving God who rests that authority in the Groups, themselves and Who communicates directly with each individual Group when they seek that direction. Groups have primary and ultimate authority – the alpha and the omega, the beginning, middle, and end. In fact, the Traditions that the Groups adopted as our long form in 1981 (the original essays in the Basic Text) tell us in Tradition Four that NA is addicts meeting in Groups and , in fact, "All else is not NA." The man who wrote this phrase (Greg P) later went on to explain in Precepts of Service (precepts the office refused to ever let the Fellowship consider or see) that the services we create are tools in the hands of the Groups.

3. *The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.*

Who assigns the responsibilities? When we used the Traditions, before

world services told us the Traditions alone were insufficient for them to be able to achieve their long term vision and implemented the Concepts, responsibilities were assigned and appropriate authority temporarily delegated on a case-by-case basis. The 1989 ADHOC report which was mentioned earlier also tacitly admits that the "servants" who wrote the Concepts did not want to consult the Groups on a case-by-case basis. They stated that their authority was often unclear. Well, that is usually the result of 1) Not asking for direction, or 2) Not being willing to accept the limits a SERVANT must adhere to. Which, brings us to Concept 4...

4. *Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.*

Does anyone really need to read beyond the first two words of this Concept to see how out of line it is with the spirit and letter of Tradition Two? When the trustees removed the phrase "We have no leaders" from the "What Is the Narcotics Anonymous Program" reading in the mid-eighties, they explained that the Second Tradition tells us we have leaders. Perhaps they did not read the two words following the word "leaders" in that Tradition: "are but..." If "Our leaders are but trusted servants" (look up the word "but" in this context in any dictionary and you will see it

Update on Book Stockpile July 2020 Historical Perspective Group

Last update before the virus.

We had a Total of - 4250 Baby Blues in Stock
Since than we sold -3050 Baby Blues
We have – 1200 Baby Blues In Stock as of 7/30/2020

Grey Books - We had 3244 in Stock
Grey Books Sold 744
Grey Books left in Stock - 2500

We bought in +\$2745 Dollars in Baby Blue
Grey Books bought in +\$1413.60

Total beginning Balance
\$1,521.49

Ending balance
\$5254.51 with the Credit of +\$415.58 owed from Printing company
= \$5680.09 in Balance for Book purchase
In Service

Historical Perspective Group
Contact for Book Information Matrixmatchclub@ayhoo.com

Stockpile update Hengelo (Europe) 07/2020

Original Count per Dec. 2019: (Book Order from Printer)

Book	Amount	Price	Total
Grey Book	700 pcs	€1,50	€1050,00
Baby Blue	700 pcs	€0,75	€525,00

In stock per 5 July:

Depot	Book	Amount	Price	Total
Delden	Grey Book	200 pcs	€0,75	€150,00
	Baby Blue	224 pcs	€1,50	€336,00
Hengelo	Grey Book	122 pcs	€0,75	€91,50
	Baby Blue	221 pcs	€1,50	€331,50
Total	Grey Book	322 pcs	€0,75	€241,50
	Baby Blue	445 pcs	€1,50	€667,50
		Total		€909,00

Total books sold:

Book	Amount	Price	Total
Grey Book	225 pcs	€1,50	€382,50
Baby Blue	378 pcs	€0,75	€283,50
	Total		€666,00

Original Stockpile: €1575,00
Cash in account : €666,00
Books in depot: €909,00

ALL FUNDS ACCOUNTED FOR

means “only”) how is “effective leadership” at all compatible with this Tradition? Effective leadership is an ego statement. Have you ever heard this phrase in any context other than the corporate ideal of leadership? Is the Fellowship not lead by a Loving God as our one, ultimate authority? Leadership in NA and for NA has always been about trust, humility, and being a servant. Would a waiter or maid exercise “effective leadership” when serving you? The notion that “Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous” was completely foreign to any literature or understanding of our Traditions prior to the introduction on this Concept. Jimmy Kinnon constantly told us, “There are no big shots in NA. We have no gurus.” There is a reason our earliest members wrote the words “We have no leaders” into our readings; they had experienced first-hand what “effective leadership” does to a fellowship in the 1950s – it kills it! The uncomfortable truth is that the people who wrote these words were self-anointed “effective leaders”. When the author of the NA Tree (our original service structure) wrote about Tradition Nine he said, “How could a trusted servant manage and control? Service and management are contradictory.” The fact is this Concept turns the foundation of our Traditions (anonymity) completely upside-down. Were it in line with our Traditions, it would read something like, “Trusted service is highly valued

in Narcotics Anonymous. The quality of humility should be carefully considering when rotating leadership”.

5. For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

Any decisions of significance should be made by the Groups beforehand as is mandated by the Traditions. Defining points of accountability is fine. Our Traditions tell us major decisions are made by the Groups. In fact, our original Tradition Nine essay said services cannot “rule, censor, decide, or dictate.”

6. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.

GROUP conscience takes place in an actual GROUP. That is why it is called Group conscience in Tradition Two and not “service body conscience”. The author of our original service structure wrote, “A loving God as He may express himself in our Group conscience would find no place in an administrative structure.” Again, our original Tradition Nine essay said services cannot “rule, censor, decide, or dictate.” In longer writings published by NAWS on this subject they actually go on to say group conscience is not our only decision-making process. Really? According to Tradition Two it most certainly is.



7. *All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.*

How many times do we have to beat this dead horse? Service bodies express Group conscience – the decisions made by THE GROUPS. Votes of confidence and consensus-based decision making below the Group level annihilates Group conscience. GSRs, etc. should carry the decisions of the Groups. According to this Concept the Groups become mere consultants. Not only that, but when someone who is not a GSR votes simply because they are a member

of the committee, they get a vote in their Home Group and another vote on the committee. From all angles this Concept makes the opinions of a few, select “effective leaders” more important than the conscience of the Groups (the instructions God has given the Groups). When some members are more important than others, the anonymity of Tradition Twelve is not present in any form.

8. *Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communication.*

This is a partial truth. As these Concepts are actually corporate principles, not spiritual principles this would be true if NA were a business.

Ultimate Authority, a loving God as he may express himself in our Group Conscience...” service boards and committees only decide how they will do what they are directed to do. That is why we elect or appoint people who know how to behave: “...our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.” Servants are a distant idea to modern times but consider how a proper servant would behave. Perhaps visualize a fine waiter or waitress in a fancy restaurant. The Spiritual Principle here is surrender to the Power that effects change in our lives and supports recovery; humility and respect. Anonymity, the Spiritual Foundation of NA and the second half of our name influences us to treat each other as equals. If we are “... completely self-supporting...” we put no restrictions on member participation in the service projects our service boards or committees undertake. To do so would be to limit the voice of our higher power by selecting who is qualified to help and who is not. Certain specific tasks require certain experience or abilities but the general work needing done can be best accomplished by open volunteerism. If we limit the open participation of our members we open the door to hire unnecessary outsiders which is prohibited by “...declining outside contributions.” The Seventh tradition also speaks of funding; money is required to do many jobs and when the Spiritual purpose is right in NA the money is always there.

The Spiritual Principle here is that if it really needs done according to Group Conscience, if those doing it are Directly Responsible, NA Groups and members with Spiritual help will get it done! Simple and elegant, not complex and difficult to understand; this is true NA Service.

By: Anonymous



Tradition tells us where policy decisions are made where service direction comes from and how we should behave if we have been given responsibility. The Seventh tradition tells us where the staffing, creativity and funding come from. And the Ninth Tradition defines the structure and its primary, pivotal rule. If we understand and follow these basic parameters, if we embrace and honor these Spiritual Principles there is neither confusion nor any difficulty with structural service. Structural service according to these parameters supports our basic service. Whenever we step outside these parameters, whenever we compromise these Spiritual Principles our basic service becomes more difficult. The secondary considerations are in the fourth and tenth traditions. The fourth frees us to provide most of the local services we need at the group level. And the tenth helps keep us pure and focused, so we can genuinely support basic personal service. The simplicity and elegance of service to NA is easy to understand when we see the Spiritual Principles inherent in our Traditions clearly. NA is composed of members and Groups of members. All the service boards and committees that our Groups and members create are for NA not of NA. NA is only members and groups, the structural services we create are not a part of NA they exist only to be Directly Responsible to the Groups and members who created them. This can be difficult for some to

understand, but clarity of perception of the ninth tradition makes it simple: "NA as such, ought never to be organized..." means nothing exists to control or govern the members and Groups of NA. "Organized" means ideas, rules and concepts imposed upon us by some corporate-like structure or government. However, "...we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." When we members and Groups see the need for a service we can form a board or committee to fill that need. We are NA the board or committee is not. Perhaps the need is just for a short term and the board or committee is disbanded as soon as the job is done. Perhaps the need is ongoing, so the board or committee continues indefinitely. In either case the board or committee is not NA, we are, the board or committee just exists because we created it to perform a specific function. The specific function we create our boards and committees to do are the basic element of their Direct Responsibility. We design, prescribe and control their function. We tell all of them what to do...not the other way around. The Spiritual principle here is the sanctity of the NA group and member and the subordination of service boards and committees. All decisions about the policy and the role of service boards and committees comes from the NA groups and members they are Directly Responsible to, because "...there is but one

Sadly, many addicts (even some Oldtimers) say just that as a result of this conceptual mentality. If you have discussed the current state of service with many people at all you have likely heard some justification at some point that goes something like this: "Like it or not NA is a business", or "We are in the business of recovery." We are not a business. We are a spiritual fellowship that sometimes conducts business and we need to make sure the tools we utilize in that regard stay in line with our spiritual nature. The TRUTH is that our services depend on how well we follow our Traditions. Odd how mention of the Traditions themselves is neatly avoided all throughout the Concepts.

9. All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.

Once again, the only decision-making process defined by our Traditions is Group conscience. NA, as such creates and directs services. No mention is made of services making decisions on behalf of the Fellowship (the Groups). This again takes the decision-making out of the hands of the Groups and makes real GROUP conscience, merely a viewpoint t consider. It also elevates the viewpoints of individuals (usually shining stars and effective leaders who are present or members of the committee) to the level of

the conscience of the Groups and creates a mechanism for manipulation and control below the Group level. When a committee member has their viewpoint considered in their Home Group (if the Groups are consulted at all), they again have it considered when the service body decides on behalf of the Groups or NA as a whole.

10. Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance, without fear of reprisal.

Sounds good, but what about the members of the Fellowship who are not members of the service body that these effective leaders have taken upon themselves to make decisions for? It is not surprising that a philosophy that values effective leadership over humility and service would focus on the grievances of the individuals, and then only those who are members of that body – you know the important people. Again, this flies in the face of anonymity. More so, by implying an authority inherent in services which should not be there to begin with. Further, why is there no mention of a "Right of Decision" of any individual Group? This cleverly replaces the right of any Group to accept or reject decisions supposedly made in their behalf with a redress of personal grievance which does not guarantee Group autonomy or the complete creative freedom of the individual NA member.

11. NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose and must be managed responsibly.

NA funds are the property of the Groups, whose primary purpose it is to carry the message. The Groups should instruct all spending based on the primary purpose of the GROUPS. The purpose of services is to be directly responsible to (follow the will and instructions of) the Groups. No wonder so much spending goes on at all levels of service without consulting the Groups at all. We should not be "donating" to services who then "manage" "NA funds" and even create more funds, often without asking the Groups about putting on a fundraiser or by selling marked-up literature to the Groups – literature the Groups already own! What we should be doing is directly funding the services we ask for on a line-time basis and reviewing those services regularly (yearly at a minimum). Groups drive the primary purpose, are autonomous, and are self-reporting. Services are none of these things. They rely on the Groups. How often is it said, "services are self-reporting?" This only happens through the Concepts. When services are self-supporting rather than relying on the Groups, they become autonomous and can no longer be effectively directed by the Groups. Why do you think it is now so common for world, regions, and sometimes even areas to have the audacity to dictate

to the Groups? They have taken the primary purpose of the Groups unto themselves via this Concept. They view the Groups as needing them, rather than them needing, and serving the Groups.

12. In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.

This statement would not even be necessary if the preceding Concepts did not create government. In effect, we are going to govern the Fellowship, but we're not going to call it that. You can sprinkle all the sugar on it you want, but when you delegate the authority of the Groups to the services to act for, maintain, and develop services on behalf of NA as a whole, government is exactly what you have created.

An old timer once wrote "NA Should never be run by bureaucracy or management nor controlled by individuals within an administrative structure. If we were to allow this, NA would surely lose the best it has to offer and choke to death on our insanities." Sounds a lot like the service structure the Concepts have given us.

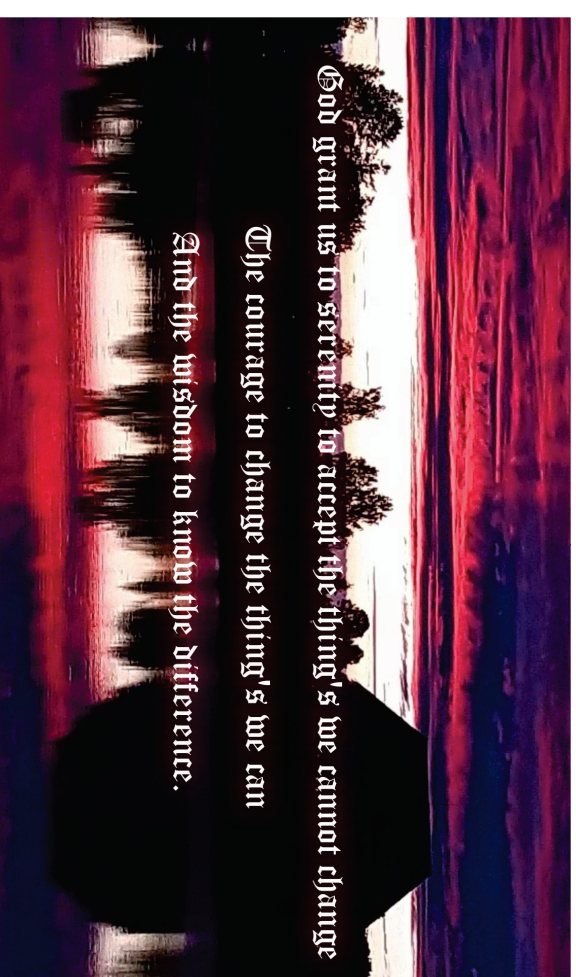
**Written by: Anonymous
Addict From: Utah USA**

within the fellowship, because no law enforcement agencies are involved." By signing attendance records we can give the perception that we are connected.

The autonomy guaranteed in the 4th Tradition gives each group the right to decide for themselves whether or not to sign court cards. Even "mighty" NAW\$ says, "Ultimately, this is the group's choice to make." If a group decides not to sign them, what about the addict who has to go back to Drug Court or their Probation Officer with a blank card? That's why, on a regional level, we need to inform the authorities that we cannot guarantee attendance verification. Personally, I feel that this should have been done a long time ago, when we first saw court slips.

SIMPLE AND ELEGANT

Service in NA is not mystical or complicated. One addict helping another, you and I reaching out a hand to someone who wants to stop using, lose the desire to use and find a new way of life. Sharing with them how it happened for us, how we did it, how we abstained, what we learned, the actions we took, the feelings we felt. Giving them the confidence that if we could do it they can too, just for today. That is basic service, the most important service there is. The proper goal of structural service is to support us in our basic service and make it easier for us. Three primary Spiritual Principles and a couple of secondary considerations guide us in all our structural service efforts. True service is simple and elegant. The Second



**God grant us to serenity to accept the things we cannot change
The courage to change the things we can
And the wisdom to know the difference.**

continue in the vein of earlier Guide to Service drafts, the group decided that a unified model should be pursued, one that does not provide for a separate American [National] structure. The group proposes adapting the current structure to consolidate the currently diffuse administration of world services.

From History Facts How History Affects Us Without Are Knowledge

Court Slips and Our Traditions

Due to the prevalence of Court Mandated attendance to Narcotics Anonymous meetings, questions arise as to where this practice stands in light of our Traditions and values. The 6th Tradition says, "An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose." and in the writing, "Our Sixth Tradition tells us some of the things we must do to preserve and protect our primary purpose. This Tradition is the basis for our policy of non-affiliation and is extremely important to the continuation and growth of Narcotics Anonymous" (all quotes from text are taken from the 3rd Edition Revised).

According to The American Heritage dictionary the word "affiliate"

means: To associate (oneself) as a subordinate, subsidiary, employee, or member. The courts need to verify attendance of those addicts mandated to attend meetings, so they rely upon us to verify attendance. Many addicts feel that NA is being employed (employed as "used", not "hired") to provide a service to the courts. With today's technology it is possible to verify location down to the street address with a handheld GPS unit. Another alternative is to have a monitor attend an open meeting and have all clients attend that meeting.

The 3rd Tradition says, "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using." In the essay it says, "We feel the ideal state for our fellowship exists when addicts can come freely and openly to an N.A. meeting, whenever and wherever they choose, and leave just as freely if they want." Court mandated attendees are welcome at Narcotics Anonymous meetings. No one is saying that the courts shouldn't send us addicts. The issue is attendance verification. Anonymity is one of the core values of our fellowship and all members are entitled to anonymity in NA meetings. How can we reconcile that with providing a written record of someone's attendance at a meeting?

In "What Is the NA Program?" it says, "We are not connected with any Political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time." Later it states, "We feel totally free to express ourselves

FOR HOW THE TABLES HAVE TURNED

*I remember as a little girl,
You were my knight in shining armor,
you were my world.*

*I looked up to you, in every single way.
I wanted to be just like you, I
I would even mimic words you'd say.*

*You weren't just my big brother,
you were my inspiration.
Little did I know many years later,
progressively that would turn into total devastation.*

*Once I wanted to be just like you,
now I wish you were more like me.
For how the tables have turned,
what I once thought was rock star,
now just represents complete agony.*

*From the freedom I feel,
to the sadness in you I see.
I would give anything to be able to give you,
even some of what was so freely given to me.*

*I love you brother,
more than words can explain.*

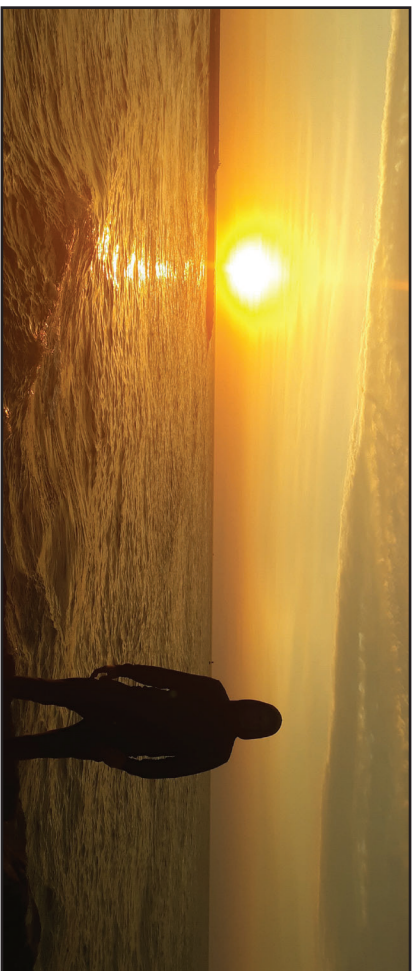
*I just pray, one day,
You'll finally get sick of feeling the pain.*

*There is a way out, I promise you bro.
Come to the rooms, take a seat.
What have you got to lose, you know?*

*You might hear some gold,
and even relate to some.
You might even just want,
what some there have got.*

*The freedom from not using,
not ever, not one!*

*Written by An Anonymous Addict
From: An Unknown place*



A Bright Future

We made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God.

Perhaps we've become so disappointed that we've given up hope for the future altogether.

We don't know what the future holds, but when we give our lives to God, He can be trusted with our future.

Regardless of how bad our lives might be at the moment; we can still trust Him to bring about glorious good in our lives.

In the fellowship of NA we are taught how to trust God as we learn to live each step.

As we learn to trust God when it looked like we didn't even have a future to look forward to. As newcomers we walk into the rooms of the fellowship and we heard saying like let go. And let God, get off the cross we need the wood, listen to your gut. It all comes down to coming to

the trust of your higher power for me it was a process I wanted nothing to do with a simple spiritual but not religious program.

But once I came to a place where I could trust the God of my understanding my life begin to change

No matter what dire straits we may find ourselves in presently, we can give God our future and be assured that the God of your understanding wherever you are on you journey can be trusted

Even when everything seems dark and hopeless, God promises us a bright, new future.

This is what the past is for! Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see. - Corrie ten Boom

Keep standing, keep believing and keep hoping because God has a bright future in store for you! – Unknown

Written: By an Anonymous Addict From NC USA

Since its inception, the body we've called the World Service Conference has given its attention primarily to services affecting the fellowship in the United States. The conference has done its best to reach out to other countries as well, giving whatever support it could to budding national fellowships. Nonetheless, it has remained a U.S. body that has sponsored some international outreach activities, rather than becoming an international forum. The time appears to be ripe for focusing the work of the North American Service Conference onto its own service needs, and creating a truly international service agency to meet the needs of Narcotics Anonymous worldwide.

The new international agency would hold the rights to the Narcotics Anonymous name, the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Principles, and our Basic Text. It would have two primary functions: to maintain the integrity of the N.A. movement worldwide, and to lend support to new national fellowships. The agency would be directed by a board of delegates from the various national fellowships. The international agency would be funded from royalty fees paid by national fellowships for rights to the Basic Text, and by a "pay as you're able" sort of contribution system from the national fellowships. National fellowships would be free to develop recovery literature, service guides, and a service structure appropriate to their own needs,

customs, and laws, so long as they remained consistent with the steps, traditions, and principles of service.

Between now and the next conference, the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service will be conducting workshops in various locations across North America, and one workshop each in Europe and the South Pacific, to present the Guide to the fellowship. When this conference meets next, we hope to go over the Guide and pin down the details of the new national/world service arrangement. And when we leave the 1990 World Service Conference, the ad hoc committee believes we will have a plan that assures the effective delivery of the services necessary to carry the N.A. message, ultimately, to any addict on the globe seeking recovery from addiction.

Then This happened:
On Sunday, August 16, 1992, a working group composed of Dave Tynes (WSC chair, NAS chair), Becky Meyer (WSB chair, NAS member), Stu Tooredman (WSB JAC chair, NAS member), Joe Gossett (WSO executive), Anthony Edmondson (WSO administrative staff), Steve Lantos (WSO NAS coordinator), and Lee Manchester (WSO NAS editorial staff) met to develop a model to be used in completing the chapters on national and world services for A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous.

The members of this group were in unanimous agreement with the points presented below. Rather than

For those of us that didn't get killed by the disease a possibility of change appeared, a greater Power of light and love. We may all been awakened to this possibility in different ways, but we ended up in the same place — Narcotics Anonymous. We learned that this was a recovering tribe who were guided by a Higher Power. Here we arrest our former master with 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. Our self-centeredness shifts to a concern for others, primarily the still suffering addict. How this comes about may differ from person to person, but for those of us that can relate to the shift knows that we're no longer slaves of addiction, but servants of a Power Greater.

Being a servant comes with certain responsibilities. We are no longer the most important person; the suffering addict is. We are trusted by our tribe to be a part of the Group Conscience. Some of us go onto carry that Conscience as Group Representatives. This is a huge change from how we used to live. We weren't trusted with anything. We couldn't even trust ourselves. Our own recovery is in fact a result of someone else's service. We stay here to give back what's been freely given to us. We have no leaders, no masters, or executives. We are all servants of spiritual principles.

We have gone from being destructive to being productive, from slavery to freedom. Today we are grateful servants of empathy and happiness.

You have been served the spiritual supine, now pass it forward!

**Written By, Anonymous
From Sweden**



How History Affects Us Without Are Knowledge

WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A.
Service Committee Report to the
1989 World Service Conference

...
The Guide to Service will take an additional step, one we've seen coming since the creation of the first national service assembly a couple of years ago in the United Kingdom.

Misinformed People

As an addict, I feel that I have to learn most things the hard way. Our Basic Text says that before coming to Narcotics Anonymous most of what we knew about addiction came from misinformed people. I believe that to be true. One of the things that I have had to learn the hard way is that to inform them of the fact that I am a recovering addict is not enough for me. Since coming to Narcotics Anonymous, I have had one surgery. I informed the doctors that I was a recovering addict and that I did not want any Narcotic pain medication. They congratulated me for being in recovery and told me that there was a non-narcotic medication that I could be prescribed. I knew this other drug from early in active addiction because I used to steal it from my father. Even though it was non-narcotic, it was in fact mood changing and mind altering. This early in recovery and do to the misinformation that I heard from my sponsor and other addicts in the meetings, I had just enough justification to take that medication. In fact, I took it as prescribed until it was gone. I also got a refill. I knew as I was taking it that I didn't really need it but I did it anyway. I did not get honest and I did not change my clean date at that time.

About a year later I had a little over what I was calling a year clean and I was struggling really bad with anxiety and depression. I was work-

ing the steps with a sponsor and was working the program to the best of my ability at the time. I talked to another addict about it and they told me that they went to see a psychiatrist after they had a year clean and were put on medication that really helped them. I immediately called and made an appointment. When I went to the doctor, I talked to them for five minutes before leaving with a prescription. I even informed them that I was a recovering addict. I took the medication for the next three days and it indeed altered my mind. The problem was that was not what I really wanted. I really wanted to be completely abstinent I just didn't know how. I was doing what people were telling me and it just didn't seem to be working. After this I still did not change my clean date.

Right before I was to celebrate eighteen months clean, my daughter was born. My girlfriend had to have an emergency c-section and ended up needing medication. She was given a prescription to take home and I thought I was stronger than I was. The prescription was in my house for roughly twenty minutes before I impulsively stole one. It did not even feel real. It felt like my body was acting against my will. I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but I could not stop myself.

the next couple days without taking another one. I knew that my will power was not enough to keep my from taking another. I lived with that guilt for four days before I got honest with my sponsor. My disease was trying to convince me that I needed that medication because I had a headache. It was total nonsense. This time I did change my clean date and today I have over eighteen months of total abstinence. It has been a very rough road but it has been so worth it. Today, I stick to what our literature written by addicts for addicts says about our disease and how to deal with these issues. I understand that ultimately my recovery is my responsibility, not my doctor's.

Written: By an Anonymous Addict From: Ohio USA

Lifeboat

"N.A. is like a lifeboat in a sea of isolation, unwillingness and chemicals."

The help we get in Narcotics Anonymous is much like a lifeboat in a sea. The sea can stand for the disease of addiction and all that it holds for us. It can also stand for life the way it comes, wave after wave. No matter how we look at it, we need a lifeboat to survive.

The best thing about N.A. is that we are no longer alone, and the help we need comes to us through

others. Some even say that a Greater Power works through us when we are together. That is why our meetings are so special. Together we can do what we all could not do on our own: Stay Clean and live live without the use of drugs. The Lifeboat is N.A. and when we are in the boat, we have the best chance of surviving the waves. Still we would not be addicts if we would not try to convince ourselves that we can ride these waves alone...

How often do we jump out of the boat and fight this ocean on our own? We might try to hold on to everything we come across to stay above water. We might swim like crazy trying not to drown. Or we might just give up and sink down to darkness. What insanity it is to try to do this alone. All it can do for us is help us to lose hope and trust that it will be all right. It is too much for us to do alone.

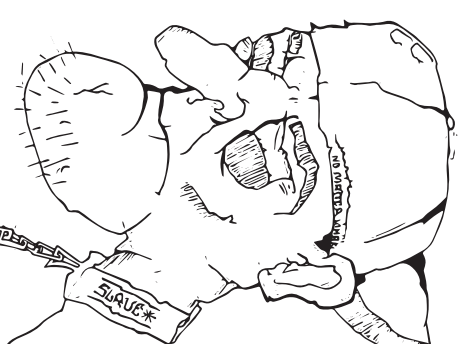
Being in the lifeboat makes it possible for us to experience wave after wave and find out that together in this boat we can survive them all. No matter how big or how many, together we have all we need. No one needs to drown by themselves.

Written: By an Anonymous Addict From the Netherlands



From a slave to a servant

We used to be enslaved by our addiction. All our actions were polluted by dishonesty, fear, obsession and compulsion. Our master demanded that we ran from responsibility, that we distorted reality to any cost. We started to believe that we were the master, that we were in control despite all the staggering evidence of the opposite. Our mental state grew out of proportion, we were the center of the universe, a universe that consisted of bitterness, stupid people, fear, evil, hopelessness and darkness. We were kidnapped by the sick self. Our spirit whispered that we were dying, but the disease, our master, quickly drowned those whispers with more lies and deception. We needed help, desperately. Our master was killing us, and we blamed ourselves for it.



Groups help carry our message to many addicts and make it possible for many to be able to recover. What would happen if our Groups die? NA would not exist. It is happening all around us as many Groups don't truly understand their responsibility for carrying the message. They are confusing uniformity with unity. They are being taught to be controlled and governed rather than having true autonomy. Many Groups for lack of a better way of putting it have a dead spirit inside their rooms. It is not attractive, and it is taking its toll on NA as a whole.

We are seeing some Groups start to understand the true power of our Traditions. It is starting to help addicts recover more and more each day. Addicts are no longer hiding from honesty as much. Addicts are starting to face reality as they learn more about the responsibility the Group has. So, because of this growth in understanding how important our Traditions are more addicts are starting to be able to experience the true freedom Narcotics Anonymous provides. The evidence is in the Groups that abide in our Traditions of how powerful OUR Traditions are. So, which came first the chicken or the egg? Does the egg need the Chicken to push it across the road? I guess it really don't matter as it is clear we need both the Steps and our Traditions.

Written By: An Anonymous Addict From: Nebraska USA

We must ask ourselves, Could I handle the suffering and opposition that do and stay clean just for today?

To many of us, the aging process is a depressing reality—one we'd like to avoid.

The fact that we pay great sums of money for cosmetic surgery, hair coloring, and the like is evidence of that.

But there is a comforting side to aging if we trust in our recovery.

People must be introduced to a new way of living and we have found it in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous and a spiritual program "just For Today"

Written By: An Anonymous Addict From: NC USA



ARE THE TRADITIONS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE STEPS?

Did the title at least get your attention? I was thinking about this subject for months and another addict shared in a meeting my thoughts. It inspired me to get to writing this article. Our Steps save us from ourselves. They help us to not commit suicide. There is no doubt WE need our Steps. In fact if we truly believe how our 12th Step was written before when it said ("Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those Steps, we sought to carry the message to addicts and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.") there is a possibility of us really not being prepared to truly live our Traditions without the spiritual awakening as a result of those Steps. So that makes the Steps necessary to have before the Traditions. Personally, in my own life this was the case also as I truly was not prepared to surrender my ego to the WE of NA until I had lived the first 11 Steps of NA. This doesn't give us a reason to not start to get an understanding of our Traditions while learning how to live our Steps. The two go hand in hand.

That being said the thing that was shared by this other individual, and I had already been contemplating, is how our Steps help us live with ourselves. This means individuals can recover by using the Steps.

...and I am an Addict

From the first time I said my name along with the phrase "and I'm an addict" in a Narcotics Anonymous meeting I knew things were going to change. I just did not realize how much and in what ways. With that first admission I was one of you. I finally said the words, out loud, and I believed them. It was a weird mix of emotions. There was devastation at calling myself something I had been trying to deny for so long. There was relief that I didn't have to keep it in anymore. There was sadness that now I was here, and I had taken the title of "addict" and I saw what I thought was my future dying.

As I listened and tried to identify and not compare, I realized that some of these people had really good lives and qualities that I wanted in myself. They had achieved things in their recovery that I thought was over for me because I was now in recovery. That gave me hope.

I kept coming and I kept saying it. "...and I'm an Addict." It was freeing and every time I shared and started with that admission, I was releasing those little parts inside that were holding me back. I became accepting of my life as it is today. I could not change it, I still cannot today. I was not the same person I was before I started using, I was not the same person when I was using, I now had the chance to be some else. It was a blessing to know that there is

life after addiction. Still, identifying as an addict was shameful in some respects. Everything I had heard from my family and friends was that drugs were bad, and addicts were "trash." Was I now openly saying I was "trash?"

I didn't know but I kept coming and I kept saying it "....and I'm an Addict" and it just started to become normal, a part of me, a way to explain who I was and sum up all the trauma and disappointment of my past in one word. I did not need to say anymore. These people understood me.

This program is now a part of me. As I said before I was not aware of what that first admission would do. Now that I have said it, out loud, the pieces that left me every time I said it have now been replaced with the program. If I were to leave from Narcotics Anonymous, I know that I am forever changed. Nothing with ever be the same, not using, not living, not relationships. Nothing. Because I am a part of this program...." and I'm an Addict"

Written By: An Anonymous Addict From: NJ USA

The Talks We Should Not Avoid

To me what makes our Program so special is that our philosophy is based on our own experience, the experience of the Fellowship. We

have our own definition of Clean-time, we have our own concept of the disease of addiction and we have a Spiritual solution found in the Steps and Traditions of N.A. In our Basic Text it is stated clearly that N.A. is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. Although our disease could have manifested in many different ways before we came in, there's one thing that brought us to this place of powerlessness and despair; the use of drugs. My initial desire was the desire to stop using drugs. That's what I saw as my problem, the drugs.

Although after coming to N.A. I found out the use of drugs is just a symptom or our disease, our Program is about recovery from drug addiction. That is the solution newcomers are looking for. This message has been blurred, at times I heard members welcome people with other problems than drug addiction. It's all the same they said. As a matter of fact this was quite normal in N.A. in the Netherlands for a while. Either people agreed that we should be all things to all people, or people (including myself) didn't bother standing up for our Principles and looked the other way. With a bit more time in the Program I started seeing how confusing things got when there where people with gambling problems, eating disorders, gaming addictions etc. started carrying a message that isn't ours. Addicts might not find the

identification that is necessary for them to find hope and come back.

I remember when I started talking to people explaining our Program might not be for them since they didn't have a drug problem. Sometimes people get angry because in treatment they told them that N.A. was the place for them. I don't like being in these situations, I don't like conflict. The same goes for informing people about total abstinence. I know it might offend people when they hear they are not clean while in treatment they're told otherwise. It sucks when people react angry and run away. At times I have felt alone in these situations, and thought: Why do I always have to be the person to do this? At times it felt like I was just that rigid person that people shouldn't listen to much to.

The thing is, it isn't just my opinion or a hardcore way of looking at things. It is how it is written in our Basic Text. This is our philosophy, based on the experience from the members that paved the way for us. Holding on to the literature has been a great source of strength and direction for me, and the Home Group I belong to.

Today I am so grateful for the clear message we carry as a Group. What really helps us is talking about these issues in Group inventory. Reflecting on how we carry the message. Have there been problems? Do we inform newcomers and how do we inform them? What are our responsibilities as Home Group members? It is

We may be afraid to admit that we are powerless and that our life is unmanageable.

If we admit that we are powerless, won't we be tempted to give up completely in the struggle against our addiction?

It doesn't seem to make sense that we can admit powerlessness and still find the power to go on.

This paradox will be dealt with as we go on to.

Life is full of paradoxes.

"This precious treasure—this light and power that now shines within us—is held in perishable containers, that is, in our weak bodies. So everyone can see that our glorious power is from our higher power and is not our own. We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed and broken"

The picture here contrasts a precious treasure and the simple container in which the treasure is stored.

The living power poured into our life from above is the treasure.

Our human body, with all its flaws and weaknesses, is the perishable container.

As human beings, we are imperfect.

Once we recognize the paradox of powerlessness, we can be quite

relieved.

We don't have to always be strong or pretend to be perfect. We can live a real-life, with its daily struggles, in a human body beset with weakness and still find the power from above to keep going without being crushed and broken.

The hard times in life tend to either crush and disillusion or challenge and stimulate us.

It is hard for us to keep going when the going gets tough. We may think we are at the end of our rope; we are never at the end of our hope.

It can be a real encouragement to know that our higher power is with us in the midst of the trials we face and that he can use even our weaknesses for his glory.

Our perishable bodies are subject to sickness and suffering, but our higher power never abandons us.

Our perseverance in recovery from our addiction may be the gift of life to other people in bondage to a powerful dependency.

As they see God's work in our lives, they may gain the courage to face and conquer their own addiction with God's powerful help.

All our risks, humiliations, and trials are opportunities to demonstrate his power and presence in and through us.

The Journey Begins

1. *“We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.”*

Our amazing recovery journey starts with Principle One, where we admit that we are powerless and that our lives have become unmanageable, out of control. But before we begin this exciting journey, we need to ask ourselves the following two questions:

ARE WE WEARING A MASK OF DENIAL?

OVER WHAT DO WE REALLY HAVE CONTROL?

Let's look at the first question: Are we wearing a mask of denial?

Before we can make any progress in our recovery, we need to face our denial.

As soon as we remove our mask, our recovery begins—or begins again! It doesn't matter whether we're new in recovery or we've been in the process and working the principles and steps for years. Denial can rear its ugly head and return at any time. We may trade addictions or get into a new relationship that's unhealthy for us in a different way than a previous one.

As soon as we start working on this principle and admit that we're powerless, we begin to change. We see that our old ways of trying

to control our life didn't work. Our attempts were buried by our denial, and our problems were held close by our false sense of power. This leads us to the second question we need to answer:

Over what do we really have control?

In step One we recognize our need to admit our powerlessness. Our lust for the power to control is rooted in our weaknesses, not in our strengths. We need to realize our human weaknesses.

In step One we start working and living this program in earnest. When we admit we're powerless, we go on to recognize that we need a power greater than ourselves.

When I come to a full understanding of step 1 I am now ready to move on further in my Journey to the next step

2. *“We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”*

Written By: An Anonymous Addict From : NC USA

FOR SURVIVAL DURING TOUGH TIMES

1. *“We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.”*

powerful when people hear the same clear message shared by several members. Our members know why we do, what we do, and can explain to people why we are “different” than other N.A. Groups. At least that's how some see us. We can explain that it is not about being different, but we are actually using our Freedom that the Traditions talk about, to fulfill our primary purpose in a way that suits our Group.

The bottom line is that when we set aside our personal fears and stand on Principles all will be well. The result is Unity. Addicts stay clean, become our members, and find recovery. Together, as a Group, we are responsible.

Written by an Anonymous addict from the Netherlands



Attraction Rather Than Promotion:

When we speak of attraction rather than promotion it's as simple as this.

We only have one promise, Freedom from active addiction.

We cannot make any promises other than that, and that promise can only be true if the addict follows our way, learns to apply the principles in their life, and does not use drugs.

We cannot promise that an addict who lost their children can get their children back. We cannot promise that an addict may become a successful businessperson, buy a fancy car, own a large house, and become a superstar.

We are attractive because our method has been proven to work in people's lives when they actually do it. It works when an addict gets a sponsor, works the steps, applies the principles, and gets involved with a Home Group.

Our Public Relations Policy is based on attraction rather than promotion...

In other words when we are dealing with the public, we are to just inform them of who we are, where we are, and what we do. We don't set ourselves up by lending our name to any outside enterprise. When we do this, we are losing our attractiveness. If the court system and the probation division send people to our meetings with verification papers, we have become more of a promotion than

attraction. We lose the effectiveness of the Group and our atmosphere starts to disintegrate and deteriorate. We then start putting more requirements and add more promises. There's only one requirement for membership, a desire to stop using.

Now if someone is being mandated to our rooms with a verification paper we are now saying we will allow an outside agency to add more requirements on the addicts who attend our Group. Once the extra requirement is added we are now making another promise; our signature will keep the addict out of jail.

Public Information can be very clear; and simple. We can set up Public Service Announcements with our local TV channel, we can put up flyers, and we can give local agencies our information. By doing these things Narcotics Anonymous can be attractive.

Our Eleventh Traditions goes on to say we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

We do this so we do not invite public controversy to our Fellowship. If we had shown our faces on TV many people would be turned off by this. Maybe we have done a lot of things people have not forgiven us for, and they see us on TV talking about Narcotics Anonymous, it would possibly give us a bad name as a whole.

If we were to write news articles for the local paper or even broadcast

ourselves on the radio as members of Narcotics Anonymous, we may find ourselves in a public controversy.

What if a Group were to verify an attendance paper and later the member with the paper was seen robbing a bank and killed some people, we would be inviting ourselves into a public controversy? People who did not know who we are and what we do would believe we do not change and once a junkie always a junkie.

Furthermore, We should always be alert on who is watching or reading what we are saying or writing. Social Media is one of the biggest stumbling blocks we may face. Today a lot of public controversy is happening between the diseased service structure and a Group who is suing them. Both parties have invited this into public controversy. We also sometimes see members fighting with each other on social media about what they think Traditions mean and what they don't. Do we really know who is watching? Maybe it's an addict who still suffers and maybe we just turned them off from giving our program a chance. We should always be aware of our surroundings.

Written by: An Anonymous Addict From NJ USA

Grief and living on its terms

Today i am saddened to have lost a dear and near recovering addict. As addicts we never invite heartbreak into our lives. It is a forever- unwell-come guest. We do not want it to come in and touch our things. When grief knocks on our door. We pretend we are not home. We might drown out the knocking with ending text conversations and a steady stream of cries. We do whatever it takes not to let it in. Every addict will eventually experience the loss of a loved one, the question that is often asked "how does one overcome grief"? I hear the sound of concern and desperation behind this question. I hear the desire in their voices and words to understand how one sews up the dark, gaping wound. I automatically respond with some points prac-

tice patience, pray and turn to other addicts. It's so true that all these things bring comfort to my grieving heart. But it's still not the right answer. There is no right answer because the question, " how does one overcome grief"? Is fundamentally flawed. In asking it, perhaps we are trying to find a quick fix to living a life without terrible, agonizing sadness, grief, or anger. These feelings are uncomfortable, so we want to know how to get rid of them. The short answer is we can't. There may be a misguided assumption that there must be an expiration date on pain. But that date does not exist. Instead of constantly trying to overcome pain, what if we accepted every emotion that came our way? What if i stop asking and surrender.

Written By: An Anonymous Addict From: Lancaster PA

