

September 2009

Volume 4

The New/Old
NAWway



Mission Statement

*Alternate Service Information Structure for Narcotics Anonymous
is a point of collection for the informed group conscience of N.A. While we believe an attempt to reform
N.A. service from within the existing structure might be beneficial, what we believe to be a more effective
strategy is to provide a steady, reliable, non-political, and non-combative alternative
for directly responsible service.*

Unity for Narcotics Anonymous

When I attend a meeting I expect the message of NA to be the centerpiece of my experience. This is the very essence of unity for our fellowship – that each and every meeting of NA encourages me and all others in attendance to get and remain free from drugs and the desire to use them and find a new way to live. Recovery from addiction requires this: Narcotics Anonymous is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.

I also expect meetings I attend to share the 12 Steps of NA as a program of recovery from addiction. And I expect an NA meeting to be bound by the 12 Traditions. These are the qualities that make a meeting NA. This is UNITY. The following regards how we as a fellowship of recovery from addiction view the issue of “drug replacement” for our members and the general parameters apply to all those who are prescribed any mood-affecting medication who attend meetings...

WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES BULLETIN:

Regarding Methadone and Other Drug Replacement Programs

This bulletin was written by the World Service Board of Trustees in 1996

Not all of us come to our first NA meeting drug free. Some of us were uncertain about whether recovery was possible for us and initially came to meetings while still using.

Others came to their first meetings on drug replacement programs such as methadone and found it frightening to consider becoming abstinent.

One of the first things we heard was that NA is a program of complete abstinence and "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using." Some of us, upon hearing these statements, may have felt that we were not welcome at NA meetings until we were clean. But NA members reassured us that this was not the case and we were encouraged to "keep coming back." We were told that through listening to the experience, strength, and hope of other recovering addicts that we too could find freedom from active addiction if we did what they did.

Many of our members, however, have expressed concern about individuals on drug replacement

programs. Questions come up regarding such individuals' membership status, ability to share at meetings, lead meetings, or become trusted servants on any level. "Are these members clean?" they ask. "Can one really be a 'member' and still be using?"

Perhaps by answering the most important question first—the issue of membership—we can establish a context by which to approach this issue. Tradition Three says that the only requirement for NA membership is a desire to stop using. There are no exceptions to this. Desire itself establishes membership; nothing else matters, not even abstinence. It is up to the individual, no one else, to determine membership. Therefore, someone who is using and who has a desire to stop using, can be a member of NA.

Members on drug replacement programs such as methadone are encouraged to attend NA meetings. But, this raises the question: "Does NA have the right to limit members' participation in meetings?" We believe so. While some groups choose to allow such members to share, it is also a common practice for NA groups to encourage these members (or any other addict who is still using), to participate only by listening and by talking with members after the meeting or during the break. This is not meant to alienate or embarrass; this is meant only to preserve an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings. Our Fifth Tradition defines our groups' purpose: to carry the message that any addict can stop using and find a new way to live. We carry that message at our recovery meetings, where those who have some experience with NA recovery can share about it, and those who need to hear about NA recovery can listen. When an individual under the influence of a drug attempts to speak on recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, it is our experience that a mixed, or confused message may be given to a newcomer (or any member, for that matter) for this reason, many groups believe it is inappropriate for these members to share at meetings of Narcotics Anonymous.

It may be argued that a group's autonomy, as described in our Fourth Tradition, allows them to decide who may share at their meetings. However, while this is true, we believe that group autonomy does not justify allowing someone who is using to lead a meeting, be a speaker, or serve as a trusted servant. Group autonomy stands only until it affects other groups or NA as a whole. We believe it affects other groups and NA as a whole when we allow members who are not clean to be a speaker, chair a meeting, or be a trusted servant for NA. Many groups have developed guidelines to ensure that an atmosphere of recovery is maintained in their meetings. The following points are usually included:

- Suggesting that those who have used any drug within the last twenty-four hours refrain from sharing, but encouraging them to get together with members during the break or after the meeting.
- Abiding by our fellowship's suggested clean time requirements for service positions.
- Seeking meeting leaders, chairpersons, or speakers who help further our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

We make a distinction between drugs used by drug replacement programs and other prescribed drugs because such drugs are prescribed specifically as addiction treatment. Our program approaches recovery from addiction through abstinence, cautioning against the substitution of one drug for another. That's our program; it's what we offer the addict who still suffers. However, we have absolutely no opinion on methadone maintenance or any other program aimed at treating addiction. Our only purpose in addressing drug replacement and its use by our members is to define

abstinence for ourselves.

Our fellowship must be mindful of what kind of message we are carrying if a still-using addict who is not yet clean leads a meeting, or becomes a trusted servant. We believe that under these circumstances we would not be carrying the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery. Permissiveness in this area is not consistent with our traditions. We believe our position on this issue reinforces our recovery, protects our meetings, and supports addicts in striving for recovery.

To the editor:

I would like to thank you for the work you do on the New/Old NA Way. It inspires me to write. I have been going through a trip backwards though time since the newsletter has been revived in the old way of doing things.

This summer I have been to Jim M. 30 th birthday, the A.S.I.S for NA conference and the History day in North Carolina and my spirit has been revived. I traveled from PA with two friends to North Carolina, one was a newcomer from Philadelphia who called me that day and I ask him to come along with us on the trip, it was like the old day when Joe P. from Memphis used to tell me I need to be at the next NA function there was and told me to come and be part of the writing of the Basic Text of NA and I feel it is why I am clean today. The trip started off by going to a Gray Book meeting in Allentown, PA at 8:30 PM and lasted to 11 PM that night. We traveled throughout the night and drove 11 hours to North Carolina to Marks house and arrived around 10 AM. We fellowshipped and Mark was a great host.

We arrived at the History Day around 1:30 PM and we were greeted by our host from North Carolina and Bo S. & Jim and Kathleen M. It was a great informational day. We learned about the writing of the Basic Text from the addicts that were there writing the book and I relived the spirit of the writing of our book. We also learned about the new service structure A.S.I.S for NA and what it provides to the groups that are involved in the structure. Check out the web-page at nahelp.org it provides real information and downloads to our past and future. There were five speakers with a collection of over 158 years clean. They shared there involvement from the first written sentence of the Basic Text they took us on a time travel through every literature conference through the approval of the Basic Text. Then one speaker shared on the direct result that the approval form of the Basic Text had on her life and how the local fellowship grew as a result of the addicts who cared enough to give there time and energy to make a dream become possible. There was a Gray

Book on the table the whole day and newcomers kept reading the book and you could see the excitement in their eyes as a direct result of reading the Gray Book. I shared at the end of the day and shared with the newcomers the way my first real NA sponsor shared with me and I could feel there spirits coming to life. Reading the Gray is like sitting in a meeting and listening to every addict share there hopes and dreams with us. The book is a living document that excites me today...it is like Greg P. shared if we



ever have a real revision to the Basic Text the Gray book would be the greatest input to the book.

It is a great feeling every Friday night studying the Gray Book and learning from those that cared enough to give there time for me so I could have recovery as found in NA for almost the last 30 years that I have been clean. I want to thank those of you who wrote the Basic Text for my life and now we are preparing to go to Ohio for the History/Tradition weekend so we can learn from those who have come before us, who have cared enough to live and die clean and write there experience so we can follow there path in recovery though the steps/traditions of NA. The greatest feeling I have are in reading the old literature written by addicts for addicts and to know that our greatest days are before us and we will write for addicts by addicts again. The spirit is not lost, I received new hope this year from our travels though time and it is just a beginning. My next year is planned I will be in Ohio next weekend, Bill A. 30th in November 20, 21, 2009 in Hamburg PA, Jim M birthday, A. S. I. S. for NA conference June 18 thru June 20, 2010 Hamburg, PA, July in North Carolina and than back to Ohio in September 2010 for the History/Tradition weekend again which I have not missed the History/tradition weekend since it started. I also hope to fellowship with all the newcomers I met this year through meeting, emails and phone calls, keep in touch we care.

With love
From an addict who cares.
Thank you NA

Some Thoughts:

Practice and repetition will surprise us often enough to reward our efforts. Through practicing honesty along with acceptance and open-mindedness comes stronger hope of a deeper level of surrender. These life-changing attitudes open our hearts to our Higher Powers love and strength. As our willingness becomes stronger in allowing our Higher Power to continue transforming us into the Higher Power reliant people we were meant to be, we being feeling a deeper level of gratitude.

Now, instead of a vicious cycle of destruction, we feel and know a peaceful and loving cycle of the hope we were always looking for. As hope and our attitudes strengthen in love and faithfulness we can truly see the exponential growth of our own pyramid. God, Society, Service and Self take on a new and deeper level of meaning. And our reliance on our Higher Power only proves to strengthen our faith also.

In Loving Service



Re: Surrender

Today, I am learning a lot about surrender. I sit here almost blank because I am aware that the more I know the less I know. What's the answer? Surrender.

Today, I wake up with my daughter on home pass from psychiatric residential and I do not (do my first thought to do) open her door to see if she is still alive. What's the answer? Surrender.

Today, my mind may want to think about self destruction, giving up, whatever habitual response of mind (to stress and powerlessness over people, places and things) that is ingrained in this brain of mine. What is the answer? Surrender to what my mind wants to think about and instead (turning around) to think of God.

Today, I may feel down about this and that. My first thought is to wanna stay in the bed. What's the answer? Surrender. I will go to my home group meeting at noon and go do H & I tonight at a women's treatment facility.

Today, I may wanna resist doing my daily meditation but what's the answer? Surrender. Just Do It, even if I don't "think" I want to. Etc. etc. etc.

On days like this, surrender is still a battle in and out. The willingness to keep on comes from God for sure.

Some days surrender is consciously applied dozens of times in my life. What am I surrendering? My way. I am surrendering control. What am I choosing instead? God's way ~ which I am completely unfamiliar with and do not understand. I certainly do not know what the outcomes will be of allowing the way of the God of my misunderstanding. It is like driving without sight or letting go of the wheel (and closing my eyes to pray) as I coast down a steep, winding road. Eventually, with lots of practice, I close my eyes with more and more peace and faith. Then, I freely open my eyes and instead of only seeing "me" I see others and all of God's grace around me. I am enabled to open my eyes in faith and somehow fear miraculously fades. Eventually I am freed to not even have to close my eyes (to consciously pray) at all because my life is a constant prayer.

What I do know is only gained by paying attention to your example and then practicing it blindly myself, wherein I gain some ability to trust this unknown and completely different way.

Rather than a battle, I surely prefer surrender to be a way of living a grateful life filled with hope and faith and trust in this process. It is that way in my life more and more. I long for a surrendered way of life where I do not have to (control?) choose to do it over and over for myself, but instead surrender is just a way of living in each moment. Then like Hippyyyy says (u practice one you practice them all), surrender is faith and trust and hope and gratitude and unconditional acceptance and all of our spiritual principles rolled up joyfully in a Real freedom bow.

Sigh...

It can even be that way the rest of today...

Peace n Love

Spiritual, not Psychological

This is a spiritual, not a psychological program.....it doesn't seem like there are very many people out there anymore who know anything about the solution for the problem of addiction given in our book. In all the meetings I've been to in the past few years (except for my homegroup), the people with the most clean time are the ones who seem to share at every meeting about all the chaos and unmanageability in their lives. Week after week they share about how they've been getting complacent and how they're really going to start buckling down on their program. Then, after sharing nothing but mess and confusion, they (and everyone else) applaud their courage for sharing so honestly! They say that being able to come to the rooms of NA and share about their problems is the solution they've found to using. In the beginning, that's great—honest sharing is how we learn to identify with and start to trust others. But if you've got years clean and that's still all that you can do, then you've missed the point! The point of this program was never intended to be and is not now "group therapy" where you get better by being honest about your feelings! The solution is to work the steps honestly and thoroughly so that you can develop a working relationship with and a connection to a higher power. The "working relationship" with our higher power that our book talks about is just that—we work the steps so that we can re-align our will with God's will for us and go out and be of service to others. "Our negative sense of self is replaced by a positive concern for others" by daily seeking and acceptance of a higher power's will for us through the eleventh step. The eleventh step says that "when we finally get our own selfish motives out of the way, we begin to find a peace we never imagined". When you work the steps and develop a strong faith in and dependence upon a loving God that embodies the principles of this program, you can share with others how you've truly found a better way to live. If all you can tell a newcomer is that life still stinks most of the time because of all your own chaos and insanity but that it's ok now because you can come to meetings and share about it—well, that's not much of a solution. There are a very few people I know, however, who have worked these steps and continued a daily program of active surrender to the principles of this program IN ALL THEIR AFFAIRS!! and these people come to meeting after meeting, year after year, and share about how their life is an incredibly journey of "ongoing awareness, surrender, and growth". When they have real life problems, they share about the solution found in the steps. They can share with others about the incredible miracle of their transformed lives, not just dump their sorry ass misery on unsuspecting newcomers. Sorry, but the crap that passes for the message damn near killed me and it makes me sick. If you're like me, and nothing being offered in the rooms of NA seems to work, "give yourself a break and read the book"!! There really is a miracle waiting to happen in those pages for anyone who sincerely and honestly wants to stop.

The New/Old NA Way is a quarterly newsletter of the Anonymi Foundation. The newsletter is published by email. To subscribe send an email to asisfna@yahoo.com

Visit our website at www.anonymi.info

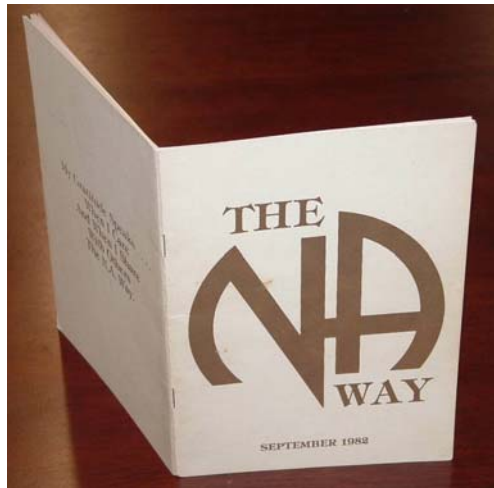
This website is dedicated to [true trusted service](#) for the NA Member, Group or committee who wants to effectively carry the NA message of total abstinence from all drugs and Recovery from Addiction to the addict who still suffers. We will be steady, reliable, non-political, and non-combative. We are guided by the [12 Traditions](#) of NA and [Directly responsible](#) to those NA Groups we serve.

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.*



“...so that no addict seeking recovery need ever die...”