

DETROIT

When I got clean in May of 1982, there were no NA meetings in the Detroit metropolitan area. The closest NA meetings (I now know) were in Pontiac, Ann Arbor and Flint. The first fledgling attempts to develop our fellowship began in metro-Detroit in July of that year, and in the months that followed a few dedicated people met each other and began tenaciously to till the soil where a Detroit area NA could grow and flourish.

Their efforts were rewarded with phenomenal growth in the mid 1980s. In the first year, our fellowship went from one or two meetings a week to about six meetings a week. By 1984 there were probably two dozen meetings and perhaps 200 addicts actively seeking recovery. Each year brought more growth and by 1986 there were meetings in every county in our area and in most cities. Hundreds of addicts were active in the fellowship and many people had "substantial" clean time of one year or more.

It was in this milieu that I began my recovery. Although I went to another fellowship for my first couple of years, I went almost exclusively to NA beginning in 1984. I did not recover quickly. Although I was able to stay clean, my addiction raged, especially in the areas of sex and gossip, where I played equal parts of perpetrator and victim.

Because our fellowship was so young, I had more clean time than almost anyone. Only one woman had more clean time than me, and she and I were not very alike. At the adamant insistence of the "purists" in our area, and probably because I didn't really want help, I did not seek assistance from those in other fellowships. I like to think that if I had, I might have recovered faster or with less pain. But maybe not.

I went from relationship to relationship with barely a moment in between. I immersed myself in knowledge of other addicts' foibles. I talked too loud and laughed too easily and wondered why I was not as happy as other people thought I should be and why I could not find anyone to love me the way I deserved to be loved. I was very angry, but I did not know why.

And so, in January of 1987, I found myself at another bottom with these addictions. I was emotionally exhausted, beaten again, embarrassed beyond words and sad to my core. It was from this low, that I wrote my vision of the recovery that was waiting for me. It would be years before the words of this poem reflected the reality of my life. But I wanted to believe in these words and the picture they painted. I wanted to believe that if I just kept coming back, this peace would someday be mine. In 1987, this poem was my prayer and my hope. In 2003, it is my reality.

Every day, in my heart and through service work, I thank all the members of Narcotics Anonymous for saving my life.