



**Narcotics
Anonymous®**

IP No. 6

Recovery and Relapse

Reprinted from the
White Booklet
*Narcotics Anonymous,
Newly Revised*

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PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA
Tel. (818) 773-9999
Fax (818) 700-0700
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to identify with the alcoholic in AA. Their identification was at the level of apparent symptoms and not at the deeper level of emotions or feelings, where empathy becomes a healing therapy for all addicted people. With several other addicts and some members of AA who had great faith in us and the program, we formed, in July of 1953, what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous. We felt that, now, the addict would find, from the start, as much identification as each needed to convince himself that he could stay clean by the example of others who had recovered for many years.

That this was what was principally needed has proved itself in these passing years. That wordless language of recognition, belief, and faith which we call empathy created the atmosphere in which we could feel time, touch reality, and recognize spiritual values long lost to many of us. In our program of recovery, we are growing in numbers and strength. Never before have so many clean addicts, of their own choice and in free society, been able to meet where they please, to maintain their recovery in complete creative freedom.

Even addicts said it could not be done the way we had it planned. We believed in openly scheduled meetings—no more hiding as other groups had tried. We believed this differed from all other methods tried before by those who advocated long withdrawal from society. We felt that the sooner the addict could face his problem in everyday living, just that much faster would he become a real, productive citizen. We eventually have to stand on our own feet and face life on its own terms, so why not from the start?

Because of this, of course, many relapsed, and many were lost completely. However, many stayed, and some came back after

their setback. The brighter part is the fact that, of those who are now our members, many have long terms of complete abstinence and are better able to help the newcomer. Their attitude, based on the spiritual values of our steps and traditions, is the dynamic force that is bringing increase and unity to our program. Now, we know that the time has come when that tired old lie, "Once an addict, always an addict," will no longer be tolerated by either society or the addict himself. We do recover.

World Service Office—EUROPE
Avenue Winston Churchill laan 249/B15
B-1180 Brussels, Europe
Tel. +32/2/346-1400
Fax +32/2/346-2282

World Service Office—CANADA
150 Britannia Rd. E. Unit 21
Mississauga, Ontario, L4Z 2A4, Canada
Tel. (905) 507-0100
Fax (905) 507-0101



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