



NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

For The Newcomer

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FOR THE NEWCOMER

The only requirement to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous is a desire to stop using. You don't have to be clean when you get here, but after the first meeting we suggest that you keep coming back and come to the meetings clean and sober. You don't have to wait for an overdose or a jail sentence to get help from N.A., nor is drug addiction a hopeless condition from which there is no recovery. It is possible to arrest the need to use drugs with the help of the Twelve-Step program of Narcotics Anonymous and the Fellowship of recovering addicts in N.A.

Here are a few questions you can answer for yourself which may help you decide if you need the help of N.A.:

1. Do I want to stop using, but can't do it alone?
2. What do I use, and how do I use it?
3. Do I con doctors for "legal" drugs, telling myself that it's okay to use these drugs because they aren't illegal?
4. Do I have more than one prescription going at one time with different doctors?
5. Do I need something to help me get going in the morning, and something to slow me down at night?
6. Am I using illegal or "heavy" drugs and think there is nothing that can be done to kick the habit?
7. Am I in trouble with friends, family or the law because of drug-related incidents?

Drug addiction can happen to anyone, in innocent or not-so-innocent circumstances. Some of us deliberately sought a way to make ourselves feel what we couldn't feel when we were clean. Others of us sought a way to turn our heads off and cope with the feelings that we could not handle. Still others suffered grave physical ailments and became addicted to the medications prescribed for us during our illnesses. Some members joined the crowd at parties, etc. using drugs a few times just to be "in" and found later that they were helpless over the use of substances that others seemed to be able to handle. Whatever the causes and circumstances, it really doesn't matter. If life has become unmanageable and you want a change and a chance to live without it being necessary to use drugs, we have found a way. Here are the Steps of Narcotics Anonymous that we use on a daily basis to help us arrest our disease:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God "as we understood Him."
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, "as we understood Him," praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

It doesn't stop with just being clean. As we abstain from chemicals and stop abusing our bodies, we come face to face with feeling that we have never coped with successfully clean and sober. Some of us even experience feelings we were not capable of having in the past. We must cultivate the willingness to meet these feelings (old and new) and deal with them as they come. We don't have to deal with them all at one time, but just for today these feelings, pleasant and unpleasant, can be dealt with.

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, our new friends and our sponsors help us deal with these feelings. In N.A. our joys are multiplied by sharing our good days with our fellows, and our sorrows are lessened when we share our bad days. For the first time in our lives we don't have to experience anything alone. Not only do we have the group but hopefully, as time progresses, we will develop a relationship with a Higher Power (as we understand It) that will always be with us.

We learn to experience feelings (e.g., anger, joy, sexual desire, fear) and realize that the feelings themselves can do us NO harm, unless we act on them. We learn to call someone if we have a feeling we cannot handle, and by sharing that feeling with a friend we learn to work through it. Chances are that our friend has had a similar experience and can relate what worked for him/her.

By close work with a sponsor we can utilize the Twelve Steps of the program as a guide to dealing with situations we have not dealt well with in the past. Sponsorship is a give and take partnership, with both gaining strength from the relationship. We suggest that you look for a sponsor as soon as you become acquainted with the members in your area. Look for someone who has been down a path similar to yours, understands where you are coming from and has learned to cope with these same types of situations. We who are recovering must share with you what we have in order to maintain our progress in the N.A. program and our ability to function without drugs. Being asked to sponsor a new member is a privilege, so don't hesitate to ask a person with whom you identify to be your sponsor. If that particular person is not able to be your sponsor, he or she may know someone with whom you can identify. Sponsorship is a rewarding experience for both, and we are all here to help and to be helped. Get phone numbers and use them. Ask questions about the program and get acquainted with the people.

We have all tried many way to overcome our addictions, and sometimes a temporary recovery was possible, but always it was followed by an even deeper involvement with addiction than before. This program offers hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless, and all you have to bring with you is the DESIRE to stop using and the willingness to put into use the Steps of this program. Come to meetings and listen with an open mind, and you will get the message of hope that we offer. Let these new ideas flow over you. Ask questions. The principles of living which are incorporated in the Twelve Steps may seem strange to you, but they work. This program works for those willing to work it.

May we also remind you that this is an ANONYMOUS program, and your anonymity will be held in the strictest confidence. "We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problems and how we can help."

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