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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

THE LONER

STAYING CLEAN IN ISOLATION

LITERARY WORK
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Source: Danny M.

THE LONER

STAYING CLEAN IN ISOLATION

Introduction

Most of us at some point of our recovery have experienced feelings of loneliness or isolation in one aspect or another. Here we have identified "the loner" as an addict with the desire for recovery who is geographically isolated. If you can't come to us, it is our hope and prayer that this pamphlet can reach you and offer workable solutions towards living a happy, joyous and free life.

The most obvious place to find the loner is where there is no N.A. Other places would include hospitals and institutions. These people in such institutions may be aware of N.A. but have no means of getting to a meeting. Additional places would be social service agencies, schools and colleges.

Some addicts have jobs that either prevent them from attending meetings, or take them to areas where there is no N.A.

We cannot express how great the need is to reach the isolated addict. The way we do this is by putting literature in hospitals and institutions. We inform the public and other 12 step fellowships so let them know we are here. Through the attraction of our program we find other addicts that identify with the disease of addiction.

Our service structure is designed to reach out to the isolated addict. N.A. has service boards and committees whose purpose is to help the addict seeking

recovery, and there are several services available. Most areas offer hotlines, newsletter, etc. If you contact the World Service Office they will put you in touch with the nearest recovering addict.

N.A. is a program of 12 steps and 12 traditions designed to help addicts regardless of where they may be, which, if worked, promises freedom from active addiction. We suggest that you get all the literature that you can get your hands on, and if at all possible get to an N.A. meeting, or go to an N.A. function. Try to start your own meeting; all you need is another addict. There are starter kits available and you may find people willing to carry a meeting to you.

The most important service N.A. offers is the recovering addict. Remember, the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. So if at all possible, contact other recovering addicts either by phone or by mail, or just share your feelings with anyone willing to listen. Remember that you don't have to be lonely even though you might be alone. Our higher power is with us always.

Sharing

There is no simple solution for the recovering addict who has no local fellowship for support. Though we may be the only recovering addict for miles around we should not be afraid to reach out for help. Any initial contact can be used as a link to new ones. Many isolated addicts have regular pen pals with whom they communicate to share their recovery. The action of writing to another addict can alleviate problems even without immediate feedback. We find that after sharing, even on paper, we are in a better space.

Using the literature will help us work our program. By writing to WSO they will

keep us informed of any functions we might choose to attend. We can also acquire tapes of meetings, speakers, and conventions, which act as a substitute for feedback from other addicts and give us insight on problems we cannot solve alone.

Crisis

Crisis comes to all addicts in many forms. Without other addicts or a meeting, routine problems can become magnified in our minds, and seem as devastating as the death of a loved one, financial difficulties or divorce. We entertained the thought that staying clean was not paying off and the old thinking stirred up self pity, resentment and anger. Whatever pain we experience will pass. Through prayer, meditation and sharing we keep our minds off our discomfort and have the strength to keep our priorities in order.

Problems are realities of life and do not go away just because we are clean. We grow through pain in recovery and often find that a crisis can be a gift, an opportunity to experience growth by living clean. No matter how painful life's tragedies can be for us, one thing is clear-- we must not use no matter what. We have found that if we put forth half the effort to stay clean as we did to use, we have an excellent chance to maintain our recovery. When we reach out for help, we begin to grow.

Living The Program

The steps are how we maintain our abstinence, and recover from the disease of addiction. After working the steps comes living the program. Through direct application of these principles in all our affairs we find acceptance, faith, and humility. We learn to live life on it's own terms.

As we recover we come to depend on a power greater than ourselves. We learn that by asking for his will for us, and the power to carry that out, we can do things we never believed possible. Our lives become managable, and we lose the obsession to use, just for today.

We cannot afford to become complacent because our disease is with us 24 hours a day. Daily vigilance towards defective attitudes is essential for ongoing recovery. In living the steps we begin to let go of our self-obsession. We learn that attitudes, thoughts, and reactions change. In time we realize that we are not alone and begin to understand and accept who and what we are.

By working the 12 steps of N.A. we are part of the fellowship no matter where we are. Our book has many suggestions that may be used as guidelines in our recovery. By using these tools, our despair can turn into hope and life from from active addiction.

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