



Narcotics Anonymous®

IP No. 22

Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous

This pamphlet was written to answer some of your questions concerning the program of Narcotics Anonymous. Our message is very simple: We have found a way to live without using drugs, and we are happy to share it with anyone for whom drugs are a problem.

Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous

Welcome to your first NA meeting. NA offers addicts a way to live drug-free. If you are not sure you're an addict, don't worry about it; just keep coming to our meetings. You will have all the time you need to make up your own mind.

If you are like many of us when we attended our first NA meeting, you may be feeling pretty nervous and think that everyone at the meeting is focusing on you. If so, you are not the only one. Many of us have felt the same way. It has been said, "If your stomach's all tied up in knots, you're probably in the right place." We often say that no one comes through the doors of NA by mistake. Nonaddicted people don't spend their time wondering if they're addicts. They don't even think about it. If you're wondering whether or not you're an addict, you might be one. Just allow yourself the time to listen to us share about what it has been like for us. Perhaps you will hear something that sounds familiar to you. It doesn't matter whether or not you have used the same drugs others mention. It is not important which drugs you used; you're welcome here if you want to stop using. Most addicts experience very similar feelings, and it is in focusing on our similarities, rather than our differences, that we are helpful to one another.

You may be feeling hopeless and afraid. You may think that this program, like other things you have tried, will not work. Or you may think that it will work for someone else but not for you because you feel you are different than us. Most of us felt like that when we first came to NA. Somehow we knew that we couldn't go on using drugs, but we didn't know how to stop or stay clean. We were all

afraid to let go of something that had become so important to us. It is a relief to discover that the only requirement for membership in NA is a *desire* to stop using.

At first, most of us were mistrustful and fearful of trying a new way of doing things. About the only thing we were sure of was that our old ways were not working at all. Even after getting clean, things didn't change right away. Often, even our usual activities, such as driving a car or using the telephone, seemed frightening and strange, as if we had become someone we didn't recognize. This is where the fellowship and support of other clean addicts really helps, and we begin to rely on others for the reassurance we so desperately need.

You may already be thinking: "Yes, but" or "What if?" However, even if you have doubts, you can use these simple suggestions for starters: Attend as many NA meetings as you can and collect a list of NA phone numbers to use regularly, especially when the urge for drugs is strong. The temptation is not restricted to the days and hours where meetings occur. We are clean today because we reached out for help. What helped us can help you. So don't be afraid to call another recovering addict.

The only way to keep from returning to active addiction is not to take that first drug. The most natural thing for an addict to do is to use drugs. In order for most of us to abstain from using mood-altering, mind-changing chemicals, we have had to undergo drastic changes physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The Twelve Steps of NA offer us a way to change. As someone said: "You can probably get clean by just coming to meetings. However, if you want to stay clean and experience recovery, you will need to practice the Twelve Steps." This is more than we can do alone. In the NA Fel-

lowship, we support one another in our efforts to learn and practice a new way of living that keeps us healthy and drug-free.

At your first meeting, you will meet people with various lengths of clean time. You may wonder how they could remain clean for that period of time. If you keep coming to NA meetings and stay clean, you will come to understand how it works. There is a mutual respect and caring among clean addicts because we've all had to overcome the misery of addiction. We love and support each other in our recovery. The program of NA is comprised of spiritual principles that we have found help us to remain clean. Nothing will be demanded of you, but you will receive many suggestions. This fellowship provides the opportunity for us to give you what we have found: a clean way of living. We know that we have to "give it away in order to keep it."

So, welcome! We are glad that you have made it here, and hope that you decide to stay. It is important for you to know that you will hear God mentioned at NA meetings. What we are referring to is a Power greater than ourselves that makes possible what seems impossible. We found that Power here, in NA, in the program, in the meetings, and in the people. This is the spiritual principle that has worked for us to live drug-free a day at a time; and whenever a day is too long, then five minutes at a time. We can do together what we could not do alone. We invite you to use our strength and our hope until you have found some of your own. There will come a time when you too may want to share with someone else what has been freely given to you.

KEEP COMING BACK—IT WORKS!

Your local NA helpline number is:

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ISBN 978-0-912075-32-7

English

3/07

WSO Catalog Item No. EN-3122