

Proposed Approval Form

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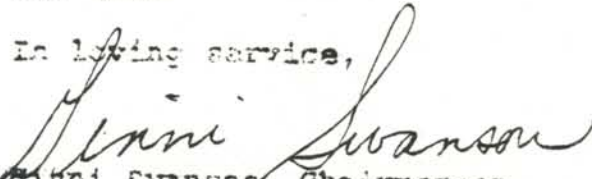
Dear fellow member,

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This material will be reviewed and discussed at the 9th World Literature Conference which will be held in Jamison, Pennsylvania, November 5th-11th, 1983. Please address all inquiries and input to:

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In loving service,


Ginni Swanson, Chairperson
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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS WHITE BOOKREVISED REVISIONFOREWARD

This booklet is an introduction of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. It is written for those men and women, who like ourselves, suffer from the seemingly hopeless disease of drug addiction. There is no "cure" for addiction, but "recovery" is possible by a program of abstinence and simple spiritual principles. This booklet contains the essentials, from our personal and group experiences that we know to be necessary for recovery.

SERENITY PRAYER

GOD...Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW. Our whole life and thinking is centered on drugs in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply, an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs in some way. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same; jails, institutions and death.

WHAT IS N.A.?

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A. but we suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles, written so simply, that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work - if you work them.

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any organization, we have no leaders, no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us, regardless.

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 problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our experience that those who work the steps to the best of their ability stay clean.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all cost. We did many people great harm but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized that in our addiction, we were slowly committing suicide, but addiction is such a cunning enemy of life that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion, and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A., we realized we were sick people who suffered from a disease like diabetes. There is no known "cure" for this, although it can be arrested at some point and "recovery" is then possible.

Through the years, thousands of addicts have recovered by practicing the steps of the Narcotics Anonymous program. We are here to share freely with any addict who wants to recover.

HOW IT WORKS

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These suggested steps are the principles that made our recovery possible.

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 fedrless 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 these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once, we didn't become addicted in one day, so remember - EASY DOES IT.

There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery, this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles. Although there are no mufts in N.A., there are three things that seem indispensable. These are honesty, openmindedness, and willingness to try. With these we are well on our way.

We feel that our approach to the problem of addiction is completely realistic, for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict. We believe that the sooner we face our problems within society, in everyday living, just that much faster do we become acceptable, responsible, and productive members of that society.

The only way to keep from getting or continuing a habit is not to take that first fix, pill or drink. If you are like us you know that one is too many and a thousand never enough. We put great emphasis on this for we know that when we use drugs in any form, or substitute one for another, we release our addiction all over again.

The substitution of one drug for another has caused a great many addicts to form new addiction symptoms or patterns, which bring as many problems as before. We seem to forget that, for us, one drug is as addictive as the next. Only by abstaining from all drugs, including alcohol, may we begin to recover from addiction.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Begin your own program by taking Step One from the previous chapter "How it Works". When we fully concede to our innermost selves that we are powerless over our addiction, we have taken a big step in our recovery. Many of us have had some reservations at this point, so give yourself a break and be as thorough as possible from the start. Go to Step Two, and so forth, and as you go on you will come to an understanding of the Program for yourself.

If you are in an institution of any kind, you have the opportunity to go through complete withdrawal and stop using for the present. We encourage you to do so and, with a clear mind, try this way of life. Upon release, continue your daily program and contact a member of N.A. Do this by mail, by phone, or in person. Better yet, come to our meetings. Here you will find the answers to some of the things that may be disturbing you now.

If you are not in an institution, the same holds true. Stop using for today. Most of us can do for eight or twelve hours what seems impossible for a longer period of time. If the compulsion or desire to use becomes too great, put yourself on a five minute basis of not using. Minutes will grow to hours and hours to days. The real miracle happens when you realize that the need for drugs has in some way been lifted from you. You have stopped using, gained some peace of mind, and started to live.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps so freedom for the groups springs from our Traditions.

As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than the forces that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A. as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues, hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

RECOVERY AND RELAPSE

Many consider continuous abstinence and recovery as noteworthy and therefore synonymous, while relapsers are sort of pushed aside or worse yet, used as statistics that in no way give a true picture of the possibility for recovery. A relapse and sometimes subsequent death of someone close to us can do the job of awakening us to the necessity of vigorous personal action.

Although all addicts are basically the same in kind, we do, as individuals differ in degree of sickness and rate of recovery. At times, a relapse was necessary to bring us to the truth that we could not use drugs. For many of us, it was a fatal truth. At other times, only by a grim and obstinate willfulness to stay clean come hell or high water until a crisis passes, can a freedom be achieved. Complete and continuous abstinence is still the best foundation for growth. By working the steps and associating regularly with other recovering addicts in N.A. groups, our chance for recovery and complete freedom in a changing and creative form are enhanced a hundredfold.

Addicts, who by any means can lose even for a time the need or desire to use, have reached a turning point that may be decisive in their recovery. This feeling of freedom hangs, at times, in the balance. To step out alone and run our own lives again draws us, yet we know that what we have has come from dependence on a Power greater than ourselves and the giving and receiving of help from others.

Many times in our recovery our old ideas will haunt us. Life may become meaningless, monotonous and boring. We may tire mentally in practicing our new ideas and tire physically in our new activities, yet we know that if we fail to practice them we will surely take up our old ways. We know that if we do not use what we have, we will lose what we have. These times are often the periods of our greatest growth. Our minds and bodies seem tired of it all, yet if we reach outside ourselves, we find renewed strength and hope.

Quality, not quantity is the most important aspect of our recovery. Recovery from addiction is our goal, not mere physical abstinence. To improve ourselves takes effort and there is no way in the world to graft a new idea on a closed mind. Our resistance to change seems built in; we need to recognize our inherent enemies: apathy, narrowmindedness and procrastination. We set aside these old attitudes by trusting in our Higher Power, cleaning house and helping others.

WE DO RECOVER

Although our lifestyles may differ, addiction makes us one of a kind. Our personal stories may vary in individual pattern, but in the end, we all have the same thing in common. This common illness or disorder is addiction. We know well the three things that make up addiction: obsession, compulsion and self-centeredness. Obsession - that fixed idea that takes us back time and again to our particular drug or some substitute, to recapture the ease and comfort we once knew. Compulsion - that once having

started the process with any drugs, we cannot stop through our own power of will. Because of our physical sensitivity to drugs we are completely in the grip of a destructive power greater than ourselves. Self-centeredness - the idea that we could stop using on our own, despite all evidence to the contrary.

When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be these alternatives: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends - jails, institutions or death; or find a new way to live. A simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. This is a simple spiritual program, known as Narcotics Anonymous.

We know that we are powerless over a disease which is incurable, progressive and fatal. If not arrested, it gets worse until we die. We cannot deal with the obsession, compulsion and self-centeredness. Our alternative is to stop using and start learning how to live. When we are willing to follow this course and take advantage of the help available to us, a whole new life opens up.

JUST FOR TODAY

Tell yourself -

JUST FOR TODAY my thoughts will be on my recovery, living and enjoying life without the use of drugs.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have faith in someone in N.A. who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have a program. I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.

JUST FOR TODAY through N.A., I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

JUST FOR TODAY I will be unafraid, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear.

HOW IT ALL STARTED

When my addiction brought me to the point of complete powerlessness, uselessness and surrender some thirty years ago, there was no N.A. I found A.A. and in that Fellowship found addicts who had also found that Program to be the answer to their problem. However, we knew that many were still going down the road to disillusion, degradation and death, because they were unable to identify with the alcoholic in A.A. Their identification was at

the level of apparent symptoms and not at the deeper level of emotions or feelings. With several other addicts and some members of A.A. 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 as much identification from the start as each needed to convince himself that he could stay clean, by the example of others who had stayed clean for many years.

The wordless language of recognition, belief and faith, which we call empathy, has proved to be what was needed in these passing years. It has created the atmosphere in which we could recognize spiritual values long lost to many of us. In our program of recovery we are growing in numbers and in strength. Never before have so many addicts, of their own choice and in free society, been able to meet where they please to maintain their recovery.

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 believe this differed from all other methods tried before by those who advocated long withdrawal from society. We felt that the sooner addicts could face their problems in everyday living, just that much faster would they become productive people. We eventually had 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 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 the old lie, "Once an addict, always an addict," will no longer be tolerated by either society or the addict himself. We do recover.

In N.A., we follow a program adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., many of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol as we were to all drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.