



**Dulles Corridor Area of
Narcotics Anonymous**

Events:

February 16
Shevana Sweetheart Dance

February 17
Karaoke and Game Night
Community Lutheran
Church

February 25
Dulles Corridor Area
Service
2:00PM-5:00PM
St. Timothy's Church
Herndon, VA

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Step Two: Restoration to Sanity and Coming to Believe

by Barbara P.

It started with a tiny spark of hope. Maybe, just maybe, if this program worked for you, it could work for me. I had already come to some realization that my life was unmanageable and I was powerless over my addiction. I had come to the end of the road, where insanity met denial and I could not go on in my addiction any longer. I've heard insanity described as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". What then is the definition of sanity?

For me, it is having enough honesty and open-mindedness to accept that my way didn't work and I need to do something "different". It means having enough willingness to try that "different" way. And what is that "different" way? It's the Narcotics Anonymous way. It's simple. It is said in many meetings we attend. I heard it over and over again during the very beginning of my recovery. Don't pick up.

Go to meetings. Get a sponsor. Work the steps. I still hear it at most of the meetings I go to.

Simple? Yes. Easy? Probably not. Besides practicing the spiritual principles of hope, honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, I had to exert a little faith. In the beginning that is all it was, a little faith. I put one foot in front of the other and tried the "different" way looking for "different" results. My faith was in the program, because I saw it worked for you and had a little faith and hope that if I applied open-mindedness and willingness it could also work for me.

As I practiced these spiritual principles (it's a spiritual, not religious

program), I began to be restored to a small measure of sanity. Sometime in the beginning of my recovery, I was relieved of the obsession to use drugs at least most of the time. I saw that as nothing short of a miracle. My faith grew a little bit more.

As I continued working the steps I started having more spiritual insights and I began to see spiritual gifts in other people in NA. I began to see that you and I were not so different after all. In fact, WE were more alike than different. My faith blossomed into something I never thought I could have.

Most of the time I have peace that something more powerful than me is at work in my tiny little life, in the World, and in the Universe.

That something greater than me is restoring me to sanity in small ways today that add up and don't seem so diminutive in the long run.

There are days when things don't go right in my world. There are hardships and pains and heartaches, like everyone else's.

And when I get in enough pain, I step up my program. I call my sponsor more often, spend more time on my knees, call additional people in my network, work extra time on my steps. And I get through the pain. And on the other end of insanity is sanity once again and it comes as a direct result of believing that there is a power greater than me and that power loves me and wants what is best for me: restoration to soundness of mind.

The Newsletter Committee needs people to step up and write on Step 3 and Tradition 3 for March's Newsletter. Won't you consider doing service for NA in this way? It's a rewarding way to give back to a remarkable program of recovery. Deadline for March's Newsletter is Feb. 9.

Tradition 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."

by Anonymous

Tradition two means a lot of things to me. The first part entails getting out of myself and thinking about the needs of the group as individuals and the group needs as a whole (including the community that the group represents). What that means is what I necessarily need or want is not what the group needs or wants and when things don't go my way I have to have faith in my Higher Power that He is guiding things, not me. In addition, Tradition two means I am a servant of NA, whether I am aware of that fact or not and the message I carry to the still suffering addict is my primary purpose.

In a group conscience, there are a lot of aspects. We can get selfish and try to get our way or we can think of the community. There are a lot of trusted servants to appoint to different positions and we need to vote on people who will represent the group best, not necessarily who we like the best. Anytime votes come down from area we have an opportunity to truly think of what is best for NA as a whole and not ourselves as individuals. The part that helps me the very most when I read it is on page 137 of the How and Why. It says in essence that our focus should be on the "principles of the program and the solutions they point towards and not the

The Group Conscience

problems". This was a big turning point in my personal recovery when I learned to focus on the solution instead of the actual act that caused the problem.

We all have opinions, but opinions aren't facts. I am allowed to have my feelings, thoughts, and opinions, but when the majority feels a certain way that is different from the way I feel or think and I have a problem with that, I am going to have problems in my own recovery.

As a member of NA I have a responsibility to each group member and each group to share a clear message of recovery as well as to hear what other members have to say and to consider their needs. The obvious is that no one person runs NA, but each of us has a Higher Power which works collectively to form the group conscience. This in turn works with the Third Step and turning it over and having faith is what happens in our group conscience. This takes you into service.

As a trusted servant, I need to be more open to my HP and to the group itself. I don't run NA, but I am only there to be a servant and to support the group's message. To be a trusted servant is an honor and it is the best way I know to get out of myself, to reach out to others, and to have faith in something bigger than myself. We are all servants of NA, and some of us are trusted servants. As servants it is our responsibility to conduct ourselves in the community in conscientious ways.

Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, not how to better serve ourselves. Therefore our primary purpose has to be the motivator behind everything we do. The way we conduct ourselves in meetings will be seen by the newcomer and they will either see

recovery in action or chaos. The traditions run like the steps, they all intertwine.

How can you work Tradition two without working Tradition Five? On page 159 of It Works How and Why says, "Our primary purpose is at the heart of our service. With guidance from a loving Higher Power and a clear focus on the purpose, NA groups become a channel for the healing power of recovery. Narcotics Anonymous exists to help addicts find freedom from active addiction." Tradition two provides a clear path towards upholding our primary purpose and therefore is instrumental in executing our faith in a Higher Power, participating in service, and carrying a true message of recovery.

I Am Your Disease

by Jenifer W.

Hello... just in case you forgot me... I am your disease... I hate meetings... I hate Higher Powers... I hate your program. To all who come in contact with me, I wish you suffering and I wish you death. Allow me to introduce myself; I am the disease of addiction. I am cunning, baffling, and powerful. That's Me. I have killed millions and I am pleased. I love to catch you with the element of surprise. I love pretending I am your friend and lover. I have given you comfort, haven't I? Wasn't I there when you were lonely? When you wanted to die, didn't you call on me? I was there, I love to make you hurt. I love to make you cry. Better yet, I love to make you so numb you can neither hurt nor cry. When you can't feel anything at all, that's my true gratification. And all that I ask from you is long term suffering. I've been there for you always. When things were going right in your life, you invited me. You said you didn't deserve these good things, and I was

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"I Am Your Disease"

Continued from pg.2

the only one who would agree with you. Together we were able to destroy all the good things in your life. People don't take me seriously. They take strokes seriously, heart attacks, even diabetes, they take seriously. Fools. Without my help these things would not be possible. I am such a hated disease, and yet I do not come uninvited. You choose to have me. So many have chosen me over reality and peace. More than you hate me; I hate all of you who have a 12 step program. Your program, your meeting, your Higher Power. All of these things weaken me, and I can't function in the manner I am accustomed to. Now I must lie here quietly. You don't see me but I am growing bigger than ever. When you only exist, I can live. When you live, I may only exist. But I am here... Waiting... And until we meet again, if we meet again, I wish you suffering and death.

My Father's Son

"First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes the man."

-Japanese Proverbs

"...one is too many, and a thousand never enough."

-Narcotics Anonymous, Basic Text

by Kevin E.

I wake up in a daze covered in crushed beer cans. "What the fuck time is it?" It is dark, but that could mean a lot of things. "Ouch, my head is pounding." Then I realize it is actually someone pounding on my door, which, for some reason is blocked by my dresser. The pounding stops. My head still aches. It

starts again, this time on my window.

"Open up you sorry motherfucker! What the fuck you pussy! You actually blocked your door!"

One might think I would feel guilty. Not that I did not, there was a much more painful realization. It encompassed more than guilt and shame ever could. Desperation, angst, self-loathing and utter confusion combined with the knowledge that I am now officially the world's worst person washed over my shell of a being. I moved the dresser a couple inches. An arm appears.

"MOVE THIS FUCKING THING OR I WILL KNOCK IT ALL DOWN ON TOP OF YOU!"

I pull it out enough so my brother can squeeze through. Jay is six feet tall with blonde hair and steely blue eyes that possess a friendly twinkle. The twinkle is gone tonight. Last night I took three-hundred and fifty hard earned dollars from him, bringing the three day total to five-hundred sixty-five, wiping out the last of the cash he had carefully hidden in a crack on the inner frame of his closet door. His powerful hands come quick. I am knocked backwards through the clothes and trash that covered my floor and into the wall. I do not even try to avoid the blows. I deserve it plus the pain distracts me from the hunger for more cocaine. He only hits me a couple more times, and pulls most of the shots.

That actually hurts worse. How can he still care enough to not want to hurt me?

How can he believe my life is worth something? How come I can not believe it is? The pain and loneliness is buried so deep it echoes through my hollow being like a cave. I am so empty; there are no tears to express the sorrow. He spits on me, wipes his mouth and walks away after shouting a few things I can not

remember.

A week before I had decided to stop. I was doing good, had strung a few drunken days together using drugs, and believed I would never use again. Instead, there I was in my mother's bathroom with an oily, burned pipe between my cracked and swollen lips. The fingers on my shaky hands were yellow and peeling; scarred with burns from the lighter and handling the hot glass. My teeth were raw, and the stains on them ranged from red to violet with the rest of Roy G. Biv in-between. I thought: "This is the absolute last time I am ever going to do this again. So I better make it good. I will just steal an extra two-hundred dollars from my brother this time (not the usual forty). If I am lucky, the dealer will trade me some of my drug of choice for the drugs my brother's friend sells out of my mother's house. Tonight's going to be the greatest night of my life. A time to celebrate, tomorrow I will turn over a new leaf and start again. No more stealing, no more lying, no cheating and especially no more drug use... Drinking is okay though." Obviously, the next day had not turned out as I envisioned.

This was the beginning of the end for my addiction. I wish I could tell you it stopped there and everyone lived happily ever-after. That night my mother, shaken by the explosion of my mild mannered, gentle giant of a brother, called me upstairs to talk. We all knew what I was doing. She had learned months before, when our maids found a pipe under my pillow. The two of them talked to me about their constant fear. My mom now slept with her purse clutched under her bed sheets (I knew this already. Actually

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I was proud of myself for removing her car keys the night before while she was doing this.) I started to realize that they were not telling me these things because they thought I did not know, but because they were going to ask me to leave. My shelter, her house, was the only thing I had left in my life. Afraid of losing this I told them the horrible secret that was tearing me apart. I am a fugitive. I stopped participating in court ordered probation in Washington, D.C. I had, six months earlier, failed my forty fifth and final drug test; which was my eighth in a row, after having been given a second chance and re-sentenced to a longer probation period. The tears finally came. I had decided to call my health care in the morning to discuss rehabilitation. It was not really much of a decision. If I could not work things out at home, I would die on the streets.

"What do you mean you don't pay for rehab or de-tox for users of my drug of choice? Because it leaves your body too fast? Oh only abusers of drugs which cause physical dependence. Okay well I guess I will call you back tomorrow I'm gonna go find and begin shooting physically dependent drugs. Yeah, I don't think it's funny either, but what can I do? I already stole the money that could have put me in a program. Yeah, yeah, fuck you very much."

The conversation with the mental health division of my HMO plan did not go very well. It had been three days since the altercation with my brother. I slept the first two and probably would have been sleeping now except I had found my mom's Al-anon group's treasury underneath the bottom drawer in her dresser. It was a measly thirty or so bucks, but I had convinced my supplier that I was good for an extra hundred

dollars worth. I started calling rehabs in hopes that I might find an inexpensive treatment and be able to hock what was left of my meager possessions (mostly things that were not mine in the first place), to be able to afford it. I called my father who was, of course, drunk. He said he would see what he could do if I was able to book a spot in a program. My brother slept at friends' houses every night, and when he did come home he looked through and walked past me without a word.

After much searching, a counselor from the mental health center at Kaiser Permanente found a solution for me. I called Edge Hill Recovery Retreat Center. They were cheap and offered structured payments. I called my father. I had not stolen from him. Not because I would not, but because I could not. He lived far away, in his parents' basement in rural Ohio where his mother had recently passed away. He had been a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous for seventeen years, until his relapse eight years earlier. It was why he was living in his parents' basement drinking full-time, and not in our house working and enjoying his family. He said he could figure a way to pay Edge Hill. The appointment was set. I was to be saved in a couple of weeks

"My Father's Son" will be continued in the March, 2007 edition of "The Group Conscience"

A Bientot

by Sallah

Yesterday's window of darkness; that look of mirror madness. The "Crack" which continuously brought me sadness.

Dressed in black to never I pray return. Remembering back the pain. Loss without gain – some never to return. No promises of the hopeful future: only triangle of frustration, degradation and humiliation.

Out with poised ideas and broken spirit. Twelve right steps. I'll take to brighten my life. My dreams are of the future, pleasant and rewarding. I'll pay attention to the easy does it warning.

A hug, a meeting, a simple suggestion "Greeting" fellowship with a family for the needy. A gift to honestly share.

Oh save my life with acceptance when no one else cares. Surrender to a process greater and brighter than my last. Trusting the promise of a place greater than my past.

For an addict like me, it's the only solution. Now I'm diligent, trustworthy and very deserving of recovery.

Great is the promise of freedom. An attitude shared by millions and billions just like me.

Anniversaries:

Poet's Corner

Susan F., 19 year celebration at Just For Today on February 2, 2007

Scott H., 2 year celebration at Prince William Hospital on February 4, 2007

Bryan J., 1 year celebration at Free To Live on February 5, 2007

Pat K., 20 year celebration and Michelle B., 6 year celebration at Bottum Of The Mountain on February 6, 2007

Heather P., 2 year celebration at To Tell The Truth on February 11, 2007

Eric D., 17 year celebration at New Attitudes on February 20, 2007

Jason, 3 year celebration at Free To Live on February 26, 2007

Narcotics Anonymous is a nonprofit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We meet regularly to help each other stay clean. We are not interested in what or how much you used, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.

Want to see your work in print?

E-mail groupconscience@hotmail.com or log on to www.dcana.org

Dulles Corridor Area NA

Our area is located in Northern Virginia and holds about 20 meetings per week in Oakton, Reston, Chantilly, Centreville, Sterling, Leesburg and Round Hill.

Realapse on recovery

by Jasmine F.

wounds so fresh I cant yet pik scabs tears so vain self pitty or remorse either way gain me nothing I speak a forighn language though from a common world I seek to find the soul within the carcus filled with pain while embrased with such warm hope my chaos is depleting which is a frightning thought I belong I think though I am shaterd glass that will crumble with one small move its safe here as if it ever mattered Iv mooshed up my own heart yet havent let it go this world is new a place Iv never seen it moves around me as if im on a carosel trying to gain focus on one tiney spot but its me i want to see and looking out wont help this isnt what I know this isnt comfort zone because my norms are all screwd up my relapse is recovery cause I havnt been there long one day I just might get it one day I just might see If I practice what is all around one day I might find me if i close my mouth and listen if i close my eyes and move one day I might find health and relapse just wont be.

The Spiritual Pioneer

by Brendan B.

Braving an emotional frontier, He steps to the edge. Dives into the abyss of self-loathing An ocean canyon guarded by phantoms of the demon voice Whose sharp white teeth shine through the darkness. Down, down deep, Past these dark beasts. Down, down deep, Past the ache of love's weep. Down, down deep, Into the injury the child keeps. His mind now chattering like a crazed chimp, "Go back! Go back!" Ignore the ape. Stay on track. The heart cracks Open and sobs Sorrow rushes out through a primal wound, The wound of birth and life, And through this wound, this crack, comes light, Dispels the darkness, forgives the night. As sobs sob sobbing into song and joy, Unbelievable JOY! Floods the chasm, transforms the canyon Into a mountaintop surrounded by angels And bright white light Diffuse and sending LOVE in all directions HOME, Expanding, the song moves on over hills Distant and fading... Its words shall forever echo. No more sobbing now, No more sad lament, Only the sound of a heart made whole Reaching out.