



## What Is Up With this Issue?

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## Tradition Eleven

*“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”*

“This tradition deals with our relationship to those outside the Fellowship. It tells us how to conduct our efforts at the public level. Our public image consists of what we have to offer, a successful proven way of maintaining a drug-free lifestyle. While it's important to reach as many people as possible, it is imperative for our protection that we are careful about advertisements, circulars and any literature that may reach the public's hands.

Our attraction is that we are successes in our own right. As groups, we offer recovery. We have found that the success of our program speaks for itself; this is our promotion.

This tradition goes on to tell us that we need to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. This is to protect the membership and the reputation of Narcotics Anonymous. *We do not give our last names nor appear in the media as a member of Narcotics Anonymous. No individual inside or outside the Fellowship represents Narcotics Anonymous.”* Basic Text Page 75

## Who's The Prescription For, Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde?

I have a reservation, a hole in my surrender, a problem that needs addressing. It is the acceptance of my relapse on prescription drugs. I want to think that my last major relapse was 19 months ago when I was last on a 2 day bender smoking crack. But it was really only a little more than 60 days ago, June 14th this year when I took the last of my prescribed morphine (the prescription should have lasted me until July) and one of someone else's Provigil (a stimulant for narcolepsy and opiate maintenance patients) on my way to "work" at the rehab where I now reside as a patient. God always knows what I need.

I have a host of rationalizations and justifications for my use of the prescriptions as I saw fit not as prescribed but the reality is in what happened in my life not in how I handled the scripts. My life began to fall apart shortly after I first took prescription pain killers. Let me add that I took them without a network, without a sponsor, when I was not working steps, when I was isolated and in emotional pain as well as physical pain. Good plan huh?

As soon as I put the pill in my mouth I relapsed. Even though I started to take it as ordered. The reason is I didn't get the script, my addiction did. I really didn't need that strong a pain killer. I could have gotten by with something else. But the person who went to the Doctor wasn't in recovery. If I had been in recovery I would have said "I am an addict, are you sure I need this because it may kill me?" and the doctor would have prescribed something else. I didn't say that or anything like that. In fact I played up my pain to get them and as soon as I took one my life started to circle the bowl.

That I can't see or feel the puppeteer's strings is why I need NA so desperately. I was oblivious for years, well really until just a few minutes ago, about the reality of my relapse. I didn't notice it until I was in a crack house. And then I'm saying "How did I get here? Must be my wife's fault!" I went back to rehab, went home, to a few meetings and then went right back to the prescriptions. Six months later... lather, rinse, repeat.

I could have avoided this at anytime by working a program or just telling the doctors what was really up but I was no longer running my life. I wasn't sharing with anyone who could see what was happening for what it was. And I didn't recognize the new and improved Mr. Hyde.

My addiction before was clumsy and blunt. I used and fell apart; quickly, crudely and loudly. It was like a broken chain saw. Now it is more like a surgeons scalpel. I didn't even feel the cuts until I was dying.

The progression was unlike what I heard in meetings. My disease not only got stronger it got smarter, it became more sophisticated. I forgot that I am absolutely powerless over drugs.... ESPECIALLY the ones I think were not a problem in "active addiction".

We are as sick as our secrets and not telling THE DOCTOR !?!?! Exactly how I am sick is really, really sick. How to defend against this? Sadly it's simple. Work a program, don't go the doctor alone, tell your Doctor the truth, be adamant about the danger of your addiction and NEVER, EVER hold your own scripts for painkillers and the like.

My former grand sponsor (he died clean 7 years ago) told a story about picking up the wrong glass at a party and after realizing that he had swallowed alcohol, he ran to the bathroom and shoved his fingers down his throat to make himself throw up. He didn't relapse, I did.

A sip of lite beer is too much risk to take.... why? I have to think of the worst thing I did in my active addiction.... the most selfish and cruel thing and then I look at the people in my life now. I would do it to them and worse if I use again. To take that sip is to risk that. Maybe not that night... maybe not that year... but some day I'll be sitting on the curb next to the body of my dead child and a mangled car saying "How did I get here? How did this happen? Must be someone else's fault". One "successful" sip of light beer and that's where I'll end up... or worse.

My Mr. Hyde is patient and wants me dead. If I want to live I can never, ever feed him again. I have 61 days clean, not 19 months with some "sketchy" prescription drug stuff. Yes I was clean for years before but that is all gone now. However the network, some of the knowledge and good habits are not gone. NA is still here and still the same and still works if I work it. And as I know, it sucks if I don't.

## In The Shaping Room

Gary B

I recently had a chance to visit family in San Diego. While challenging at times, it was a break I really needed and was a lot of fun; I am grateful.

One of my sons has been doing carpentry work for the Ocean Beach Surf & Skate Shop so he showed me around the store, including the back rooms. We turned a corner and walked into a strange blue work room (bottom half of the pic). I asked him, "What is this?" He said, "This is the shaping room, dad." A white fiberglass surfboard was up resting on the supports of the stand. Turns out, the short board was actually being shaped by my son, which made the experience even more special and meaningful.

Looking into this OB Shaping Room was like getting punched in the guts. Something started unfolding deep inside me. I quickly shot a couple of iPics. Later I felt to Photoshop these together, along with a set of human chromosomes (the "alphabet" for every human being) and the scan of a human brain, showing the areas of the brain activated while a person prays or meditates (middle of pic). The experience and images have become an artwork and the theme for a gallery exhibit.

Flying home, while looking at clouds over California's Imperial Desert (top half of the pic), the OB Shaping Room encounter began to speak to me of recovery. Many NA truths and spiritual principles came into focus: how recovery is a process; how we must surrender, yield and cooperate; how we must accept reality and life on life's terms; how exercising faith and working our program slowly reshapes our lives; how character defects and shortcoming get sanded out; how our assets, abilities and gifting are brought forth and displayed by a loving, Higher Power – one who is always after the best in us and for us – just like a true master craftsman.

Now I can better see that the troubles and hard things of life are like the power tools and sanding paper that must be used to properly shape a fine surfboard – one that will be able to catch and ride massive waves, sometimes powerful enough to destroy. Surrender and acceptance in the Shaping Room of life brings freedom. We ride and survive rather than getting thrown to the bottom and ground to powder.

**Just for Today:** I will demonstrate my trust in God by accepting and experiencing this day just as it is.

## THE ELEVENTH TRADITION AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND ANONYMITY

The spirit of the Eleventh Tradition still remains as the world makes gains technologically. In It Works on page 205, it is clearly stated, "In the public eye-including press, radio films, and all other media-we need always maintain personal anonymity." I have to be mindful of my adherence to the Eleventh Tradition as I participate on social networking sites. It is a blatant violation of copy right laws to display an NA logo as my profile picture or as a picture in a folder on my profile. It is a blatant violation for me to announce my anniversary or share which step I am on or any other information that discloses my membership to Narcotics Anonymous; none-the-less using the acronym "NA" or using the words "Narcotics Anonymous." And this is not so much for me (although I am the type who does not appreciate when people post program related things on my wall because I am involved in my community and prefer to maintain my anonymity) but for the fellowships protection. Having a member of NA say in one post something that identifies them as a member and then a post or two later make vulgar/offensive/threatening statements (that if said in public they could be arrested), or tell of participation in something illegal is a reflection on the how the fellowship is received. In It Works on page 206-7 it states, "By the same token, we must remember that, wherever we go, we always represent NA to some degree. If we are seen acting poorly while we prominently display and NA logo on our T-shirt, we carry a distinctively unattractive message about our fellowship to the public. What we say and what we do reflects on our NA recovery and the NA fellowship. As responsible NA members, we want that reflection to be a source of attraction rather than a source of embarrassment." So maintaining personal anonymity is vital to our fellowships reputation and growth in our world.

Even as far back as January of 1993 issues of anonymity were being addressed in the NA Way Magazine, as they pertain to discussing members names with other members. Anonymity is to be practiced in and out of the rooms. Despite what some believe there is an expectation of this tradition to not only maintain or own anonymity publicly but to maintain others anonymity to other people as well. Going around asking if you know this person or that person without their implied permission is breaking their anonymity. I have been clean a long time and have had members break my anonymity to other members that I happen to know BUT I did not know them to be in the rooms but rather through a non-profit organization for which we both volunteered.

I realize that people coming into the fellowship do not know any better. I do believe it is the roles of the fellowship and sponsors to explain how vital it is to the fellowship to maintain personal anonymity.

**Subcommittee Schedule**

Subcommittee	Chair	Date & Time	Schedule	Location
H&I	Patty D.	Every Wednesday 6:00pm	To be determined	Ledos Pizza at Reston Community Center
Special Events	Jessica L. 703-473-9742	December 8th Wednesday 7:00 pm	To be determined	St. Timothy's Herndon VA
Newsletter	Joshua A. 571-221-5805	December 10th Friday 6:00 pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month	Cascades Starbucks
Outreach (meets together with) Public Information	Holly P. 571-212-2738  Paul C. 703-965-9393	December 20th Monday 6:00 pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month	St. Matthews Church, Sterling VA
Policy	Gayle M. 571-521-9535	December 1st Wednesday 7:00 pm	To be determined	St. Timothy's Herndon VA

*Spiritual Principles*

Service- (Noun)- an act of helpful activity; help; aid: to do someone a service.

*Using spiritual principles moves us from believing in our Higher Power to being aware of the reality of our Higher Power moving in and through us.*

*Just for Today*

*Be Joyful and Patient, Be grateful and humble*

*Do your work with appreciation and be kind to all.*

*Then Start again tomorrow.*

By Gary B

