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NEWSLETTER CHAIR:

Thanks to all who continue to support the DC Link.

Please distribute the DC Link Newsletter to members.

E-mail me any NA related material.

James M

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STEP 10 *"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."*

Recovery in Narcotics Anonymous is about learning how to live. Incorporating the spiritual principles we learned in the first nine steps into our lives has made it possible to live in harmony with ourselves and others. Self-examination, confronting what we find in ourselves, and owning up to our wrongs are critical elements of conducting our lives on a spiritual basis. By working the Tenth Step, we become more aware of our emotions, our mental state, and our spiritual condition. **A**s we do, we find ourselves

constantly rewarded with fresh insight. Some of us look back at our Fourth Step and wonder why we have to do a Tenth Step. **W**e may think that we've corrected all our past mistakes in the previous steps; since we have no intention of making those mistakes again, why should we continue with this *relentless self-examination*? The Tenth Step seems like a tiresome chore to some of us, a painful exercise that we could just as well avoid. But we must continue to grow, and

that's exactly what the Tenth Step helps us do. Though we will return to the previous steps again and again, the Tenth Step furthers our spiritual healing in a different way: by creating an awareness of what's going on in our lives today. **T**he importance of keeping in touch with our thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and behavior cannot be overemphasized. Every day, life presents us with new challenges. **O**ur recovery depends on our willingness to meet those challenges.

CONTINUED ON PG 3

TRADITION 10 *"Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."*

Narcotics Anonymous is a society of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean by applying certain simple spiritual principles. **O**ur primary purpose, as groups and as a fellowship, is to offer that same help to any addict seeking recovery. Aside from that, NA has no opinions whatsoever. By refusing to take sides on other issues, we avoid becoming embroiled in public controversies that could distract us from our primary purpose. *This is the message of our Tenth Tradition.* However, even in

explaining our own program in public, we may find ourselves treading on controversial ground. **NA's** views on total abstinence, on the possibility of recovering in society without long term institutionalization, on the disease concept of addiction, even our broad views on spirituality are not met with universal acceptance. **O**thers who deal with addiction and recovery may view these matters very differently than we do. We cannot deny those aspects of our program that others take exception to. We can,

however, take care to explain our program in such a way as not to invite controversy deliberately. *"We do not suggest that everyone adopt our views, nor do we oppose those with different views,"* we can explain. *"We simply want you to know what the Narcotics Anonymous program is like."* So long as we focus, as groups and as a fellowship, on our recovery experience rather than our opinions of why or how NA works, we will stay as far as possible from public controversy.

Continued on page 4



Pumpkins

A woman was asked by a co-worker, "What is it like to be a recovering addict?"

The co-worker replied, "It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in and washes all the dirt off of you. Then he cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff.

He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. and then he carves you a new smiling face and puts his light inside of you to shine, for the entire world to see."

This was passed on to you from another pumpkin. Now it is your turn to pass it to a pumpkin. I liked this enough to send it to all the pumpkins in my patch. ANON

Tenth Concept *"Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance, without fear of reprisal."*

The Tenth Concept is our fellowship's guarantee of respect for the individual trusted servant. This concept may seem self-evident, but our belief in the principle involved is so strong that we want to say it loudly and clearly. Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual society, with high ideals for how we treat each other. Our members, however, are only human, and we sometimes mistreat one another. The Tenth Concept is our spiritual society's promise that if one of us is wronged in the service environment, the aggrieved trusted servant may ask that the wrong be made right.

Tenth Step Review
Identify a situation or condition in your life that is currently a source of unmanageability
Describe the situation and indicate your concern. Use the following questions to apply the principles of the 10 Step to your situation.

The Tenth Concept is our fellowship's guarantee of respect for the individual trusted servant. If you think you've been wronged in the course of your participation in an NA service body and wish to apply Concept Ten, talk to your sponsor about it, inventory your own involvement in the matter, pray, and meditate. If, upon reflection, you still believe you have been personally aggrieved and that you should petition for redress, write a letter explaining the

situation to your service body, or share your problem in the body's sharing session. The service body then needs to address the matter and, if it agrees that you have been wronged, how to make amends. Hopefully, the Tenth Concept will need to be applied only rarely in NA service. Should the need arise, however, it is here, ready to put our spiritual fellowship's ideals into action.

NA.ORG

10th step inventory

One: In what ways are you powerless over what's happening and how is this situation showing you the unmanageability of your life, or how will continuing to try to control make life more unmanageable?

Two: How do you see your Higher Power as helping you to restore your sanity? You can start by looking outside your own head and your usual solutions.

Three: How does being willing to turn your life over to the care of your Higher Power Assist you in dealing with this?

Four: What character defects have surfaced? (such as survival skills learned during using, obsessive/compulsive behaviour, rescuing, excessive responsibility, unexpressed feelings, Resentments, etc.)

Five: Admit your wrongs (ineffective survival skills), at least to your Higher Power and yourself. Discuss it with someone in the program.

STEP 10

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Our experience tells us that some members relapse, even after long periods of clean time, because they have become complacent in recovery, allowing their resentments to build and refusing to acknowledge their wrongs. Little by little, those small hurts, half-truths, and “justified” grudges turn into deep disappointments, serious self-deceptions, and full-blown resentments.

We can't allow these threats to compromise our recovery. We have to deal with situations such as these as soon as they arise. For example, when we are faced with the tendency to behave compulsively, ignoring the consequences of our actions, we need to focus on spiritual principles, take prompt action, and continue forward in our recovery. Although forming a habit of working this step may be difficult at first, we must persist. We can set aside some time during the day for focused self-appraisal while gradually

moving toward a goal of being able to look at ourselves throughout the day. We keep going forward, striving each moment to become ever more aware of ourselves. We need to develop self-discipline; the more effort we put into doing so, the more *we'll find that working the Tenth Step will become as natural as breathing*. While we strive to maintain ongoing awareness throughout the day, it is also helpful to sit down at the end of each day and quietly reflect on what has happened and how we responded to it. Often, our sponsor will suggest that we write out our Tenth Step. We may also make use of our informational pamphlet, *Living the Program*. We may have trouble knowing when we are wrong simply because we usually intend to be right. For instance, at some point in our recovery, we may attend a group business meeting firmly convinced that we know what the

group should do. We've studied all sides of the issues. We forcefully share our views at the meeting. We're so convinced of our rightness that we fail to recognize our self-righteousness. Once we're aware that we've been wrong—whether it's five minutes, five hours, or five days after the fact—we need to admit our error as soon as possible and correct any harm we've caused. As in the Ninth Step, we find that the process of admitting our mistakes and changing our behavior brings about tremendous freedom.

As the inner chaos that we lived with for so long subsides, we begin to experience long periods of serenity. During these times, we experience the powerful presence of a loving God in our lives. We are increasingly conscious of that Power and are ready to search for ways to maintain and improve our contact with it. Seeking direction and meaning for our lives, we go on to the Eleventh Step. **NA.ORG**



Tenth Step Prayer

I pray I may continue:
 To grow in understanding & effectiveness. To take daily spot check inventories of myself. To correct mistakes when I make them. To take responsibility for my actions. To be ever aware of my negative and self-defeating attitudes and behaviours. To keep my wilfulness in check. To always remember I need YOUR help. To keep love and tolerance of others as my code. And to continue in daily prayer how I can best serve YOU MY HIGHER POWER.

10th step inventory CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Six: Are you entirely ready to have your Higher Power remove the character defects (ineffective survival skills) that have surfaced?

Seven: Can you humbly ask your Higher Power to remove your shortcomings? If not what is your resistance? Erasing them is impossible but working towards the way you'd like to be and letting go may be effective.

Eight: Make a list of people being harmed.

Nine: What amends are necessary, and how will you make the amends? Talk this over with someone experienced in program. Living amends, changing behaviour, is a part of this.

Ten: Review the above steps to be sure that nothing has been overlooked. Check yourself daily for old survival skills and new more effective actions. Write them down.



ONLY the weak can cry NAWAY

When I was a child, I cried if I wanted to gain something from my parents. When I grew older, I learned the same as everyone else around me: that Only the weak can cry.

Later, during my drug abuse, When I got to the point of total despair, I cried and wished this whole thing would be over so that I could die. I grew thinner, I was beaten, and I abased myself; but I didn't die. I thought that no one would understand what had happened to me, and I would never be able to digest the things that had happened to me.

I didn't think I could ever cry again. I became tough, and according to many, I was like a savage in the early years of my recovery—a savage who cannot and does not want to use drugs, and only hopes in his deepest soul that somewhere in the world a happier life exists. A savage from whom human feelings are very far, but who, deep in his heart, really wishes to feel them.

Then I found NA, and NA found me. My life improved and my lost dreams awoke. I trusted again. In recovery, I found friends, which I never thought I would be able to do. A wonderful period had begun. I fell in love, and the person is in the program also.

I celebrated my sixth year in NA, and something started in me then, I cried—no, I sobbed—for the first time in many, many years. It was fantastic to realize, while I was sobbing, that NA had saved my life. At last, it could happen to me. From now on, I can be weak also you know, only the weak can cry.

Tradition Ten restricts NA, as a fellowship, from stating opinions on outside issues.

However, it places no such restriction on the individual member. In Narcotics Anonymous, we believe strongly in personal freedom. Addicts who have a desire to stop using can become members of NA simply by saying so. **We** have no dues or fees, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone, ever. Though a spiritual program, we encourage our members to develop their own understanding of a Higher Power. Even our leaders are only trusted servants, with no power to tell individual members what to do, think, or say. **NA** members are encouraged to think for themselves, to develop their own opinions, and to express those opinions as they see fit. The only caution Tradition Ten offers individual NA members is

Applying Spiritual Principles

Foremost among the principles our groups and our fellowship apply in practicing Tradition Ten is the principle of unity. For all the diversity of individual opinion among our members, **N**arcotics Anonymous itself is united in having no opinion on any issues apart from its own program. As a fellowship, we agree to take positions only on those ideas that have drawn us together, our principles of recovery, not on the many personal opinions that might divide

TRADITION 10

continued from page 1

that, when speaking publicly, we think through what we're going to say before we say it. In certain situations, anything an NA member says will be taken as NA's opinion, even when the situation itself has nothing to do with Narcotics Anonymous and the member clearly states that the views expressed are strictly personal.

It's not our fault if others misinterpret what we say as individuals; this does not, however, make the complications arising from such misinterpretations any less serious for NA.

While a particular problem may be an outside issue, its effect on our recovery is not; everything affecting a recovering addict's life is material for sharing. If a problem we are having impacts our ability to stay clean and grow spiritually, it's not an outside issue.

Many things can put us off balance and challenge our recovery. We often discuss

such challenges with one another at our meetings, seeking to ease our personal burdens by sharing them with our fellow NA members.

We ask others to share how they have applied the principles of the program in similar circumstances, recovering their balance and strengthening their recovery. **We** need no one's permission to talk about such things in our meetings.

But, for all that, we all know that controversial personal opinions can distract our meetings from their primary purpose. If everything is recovery material, yet we want to help our meetings retain their focus on recovery, how do we decide what to share? We can ask ourselves some questions:

Am I sharing from my experience, or am I expounding an opinion?

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us. The Tenth Tradition is an exercise in responsibility. As groups and as a fellowship, we are responsible to carry our message to the still suffering addict. **We** are responsible to provide an atmosphere in which recovering addicts can share freely with one another. To do these things effectively, we must stay as free of the distractions of public controversy as possible. **The** way we speak as NA members often affects how others view NA; **therefore, as responsible**

members, we speak carefully, guarding the neutrality that is so important to the welfare of us all. **Such** prudence will protect our credibility in the public eye on the only issue that truly concerns Narcotics Anonymous: our program of recovery from addiction. To fulfill Tradition Ten, our groups, service boards, and committees must exercise prudence in their public contacts. **Our** program has worked for us and is available for others interested in recovery. If we can be of service, we stand ready to help. **ANON**



I had this illusion that everything should fall into place after I come into recovery; the bill collectors would stop harassing because I wasn't doing drugs any longer. The belief, that my immediate family members should trust me as though nothing had ever happened. But what I couldn't see was that the past incidents created while using had destroyed many bonds of trust and love. Through working the 12 Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, I have slowly started to clean up my side of the street. I have faced many roadblocks in my recovery but as long as I abstain from using, I can face each problem with a clear mind and conscience. This ability insures that just that much sooner can I resolve the issues and move on in life.

Getting to my 10th Step Inventory:

It was not until I was in total desperation and unable to admit fault or make amends to those injured, that the inability to risk loss by admission was seen as a pronounced symptom of powerlessness. What I have learned is that the time it took to consider my inventory and admit my faults promptly, released me from feeling bound by the tension that the other party had when I am at fault. It has been **'not knowing'** that has caused much of my problems. However, when I take honest evaluation, how can I pretend otherwise? Trying to cover up my

wrongs and misdirect the attention to others only leaves me holding the bag.

Addicts are fearful by nature and it's harder for us to realize that most mistakes are not big deals and frequently people just want to keep it from happening again. Our disease restricts our ability to live life on life's terms. Therefore, instead of letting our friends know what we did wrong, we hold back and the wrongdoing enlarges. We don't tell and unwanted pain comes from our fear of responsibility. Generally, much of this is due to our simple awkwardness and unfamiliarity with spiritual principles.

In the Tenth Step one of the principles are honesty, and one of the questions in the **NA Step Working Guide** ask: **"How does being aware of my wrongs (self-honesty) help me change my behavior"** for me, becoming honest means becoming vulnerable. Letting myself and others become aware of how I am feeling is a risk that I have to take. When I become honest with myself, I have the choice to accept, justify or rationalize every single situation in which I find myself. To **'accept'** is to love myself and know that I am okay. To **'justify'** or **'rationalize'** means to continue my suffering by making excuses and blaming others for my feelings. It seems like a simple choice but for an addict, it is a hard one. Daily honesty is **being true to the things I believe**

in, which is a large part of being true to me.

My experience has been that if I am not totally honest with a given situation, or honest in only part of it, I will still feel miserable with myself. Dishonesty also makes my self-acceptance issues that much harder to recognize. Once I begin to practice honesty with myself, I get a sense of release from my disease. I start to have a more positive outlook on life; more people learn to trust and eventually, they may ask me to share experiences with them, as I continue to be honest.

Being able to stop the daily build-up of unmade amends allows us to recover the time and energy we would otherwise waste. We are free to put this gift of life's time to better use. How we feel is dependent on what we are doing, how we do it and why we are doing it. This is where the intense interaction among members in and out of meetings is so crucial. No substitution exists for the honest observations and corrective positive caring that we can get. **T**he Program works for us in many unspoken ways. We begin to feel better as our general sensibility increases along with our ability to do things to please ourselves without injuring others. **O**ur hope, energy and enthusiasm spills over into everything we do. A sad addict is depressing but a happy addict is like a bonfire in the darkness!

ANNIVERSARIES

OCT 2 Wanda M. 11 yrs

CONGRATULATIONS

Frances W 24 yrs
Vaughn D 23 yrs
Cary C 22 yrs
Carlen A 20 yrs
William T 20 yrs
Brenda A 19 yrs
Jean E 19 yrs
Olivia S 18 yrs
Butch A 17 yrs
Gail P 15 yrs
Gutter Rat 14 yrs
Willie C 14 yrs
Kay S 14 yrs
Kym G 14 yrs
Andrea P 12 yrs
James M 3 yrs
Yolanda M 2 yrs
Delany S.



DCLINK Disclaimer:

The "DC Link" is the monthly newsletter of the DC Area Service Committee. Its purpose is "carrying the message of recovery and increasing unity". The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. No endorsement of, or affiliation with any organization is intended or implied. Reprint rights are granted to all service boards and committees of NA. Submissions from members are eagerly welcomed, but the newsletter subcommittee reserves the right to return or edit.



We're on the Web!

Regional Area:

<http://www.cprna.org>
dclink@cprna.org

INFORMATION CORNER

OCT 10

**South Potomac Area's
MINI-CONVENTION
For the Addict That Still
Suffers**

4:00pm - 1:00am
St. Barnabas Church
5203 St. Barnabas Rd.,
Temple Hills, MD
Workshops **FREE!**

Oct 14

Southwest Free Way Groups
One Year anniversary
Westminster Church
400 I St SW
7 PM - 8 PM

Oct 31

Frederick Area Special Events
Halloween Bash
620 Research Dr.
Frederick, MD 21703
8:00 pm - 12 midnight

DCASC SPECIAL EVENTS Halloween Dance

PLACE: St. Martin's Catholic Church
1908 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

DATE: October 31, 2009

TIME: 10:00 p.m. - 2:00 a.m.

COST: \$7.00



For More Information Contact:
Sasha P. (240) 965-7194
Al H. (301) 674-1334



You're invited to attend the Ultimate Weapons Group,
NA Step and Traditions Meeting.

Day: Every Wednesday Time: 7:00 PM - 8:15 PM

Location: Johnson Memorial Baptist Church
800 Ridge Road SE, Washington, DC

"The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict." Basic Text

DCASC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

DCASC AREA SERVICE

First Saturday

WESMINISTER CHURCH
400 I STREET, SW
Administrative Meeting @ 10:45
Area Meeting @ NOON

Chair: Anthony W

Vice Chair: Rhoda N

Newsletter Subcommittee

Third Friday @ Providence Hospital
St. Catherine Hall # 2 7 p.m.

Chair: James M

H&I Subcommittee

Fourth Sat @ Providence
Hospital Main Lecture Hall 1150
Varnum St NE
3pm

Chair: Gloria P

DCASC Policy Subcommittee

Third Tuesday
JMBMOH CC
746 Ridge Rd SE 6:30pm

Chair: Louis J

P.I. Subcommittee

Third Friday @ Providence Hospital
1150 Varnum St NE St Catherine Hall
Conference Room #2, 7:00pm

Chair: Jeff W.

Special Events Subcommittee

Third Saturday @ St Martin's Church
1908 N Capitol St NW 4:00pm

Chair: Sasha P

The Literature Subcommittee

Third Thursday
Kennedy Recreation Center
1401 7th St NW
6:30pm

Chair: Sandra H

Release Form: This signed release form must accompany all submissions. The undersigned give the NA Fellowship any of its agent's permission to publish the original written material I have submitted, and also grant full unconditional release from any liability arising from its use. I understand that my material may be edited, or may be published in whole or in part in another NA publication other than the "DC Link". I understand that sending my submission electronically indicates my agreement with the terms of this release.

Signature

Date