

NEW ATTITUDES, The NORVANA Newsletter

November 2009

Editor: Plenty of space this month, no outside submissions. Did people really run out of opinions? I thought about filling an entire 4-page newsletter with my own writing and/or cuts from the archives, but decided to go with a 2-page newsletter this month instead. I hope submissions resume next month.

Monthly Quiz:

- 1. When was the First Edition of the Basic Text published?**
- 2. When was the Fifth Edition published?**
- 3. When was the Sixth Edition published?**
- 4. Was the gray 18-month keytag available in 1989 and 1990? (answers on page 2)**

MY EXPERIENCE WITH STEP ONE

STEP ONE: We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

It took me 15 years to reach this point. First I had to acknowledge that I had an addiction, and denial spent years preventing this from happening. Then once I realized that I had a drug problem, that I really couldn't live without my steady using, I had to reach a point where my life became unmanageable. I was a functional addict, and I enjoyed my drug of choice for many years. The price was something I was willing to pay for quite some time; I realized that I had to have my drugs, but since I could hang on to my job and still cope with life, I was OK with that.

And then toward the end, the price got steeper and steeper. I had more and more trouble functioning. The peripheral items in my life just slipped away. Hobbies were no longer pursued; I spent more and more time alone at home. My job performance began to slip. I found that I could no longer do moderate amounts of drugs; when I used, I used compulsively, often to the point of oblivion. I could no longer abstain even for a few days, or at the end a few hours. And my grip on reality began to loosen. For me this was the most frightening of all. I had always prided myself on knowing what was real and what was not real, even when I was ripped to the gills, but now there were times when I couldn't tell.

My bottom came when I took 10 weeks off work to kick my habit. I just used compulsively for 9 1/2 weeks. My schedule lost all bearings with the 24-hour clock; I would get up, use, pass out, get up, use, pass out, regardless of whether it was day or night. I would tell myself, "I will abstain for 5 minutes", and then I couldn't do it. The only good thing about all this was it finally ripped away my last veils of denial; there was no longer any way I could deny that I had a serious problem, that I was out of control, and that my life was unmanageable. As the days dwindled down, and I was due back at work, I knew that I had two choices: continue on to insanity, or surrender and admit that I had lost the war, and hope that some outside source could help me win this battle that I could not win myself. So I asked for help, and got enrolled in a drug treatment program, and from there I entered NA.

I was in way too much of a fog to realize anything except:

1. that I needed to quit using drugs
2. that this was a major challenge that would take all my energy for a while **(continued on p. 2)**

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3. and that I might not make it but I had to try because if I didn't I would definitely NOT make it, and a slim chance was better than no chance, and that I needed all the help I could get. I thought that drugs were my whole problem. It wasn't until later that I discovered the truth of the words "The good news is that you never have to use again. The bad news is that drugs aren't your problem, YOU are your problem.", and that the drug use was a physical component of a disease whose spiritual core was total self-centeredness, and that my recovery would be one long journey escaping this self-centeredness and then staying escaped through ongoing connections with others and my program. All I knew was I needed to quit, I WANTED to quit, and even with the help I had it took everything I had at first to stay clean. And that was OK, because I DID NOT WANT TO GO BACK. More was revealed to me later. (Jim S.)

“Our inability to control our usage of drugs is a symptom of the disease of addiction. We are powerless not only over drugs, but over our addiction as well. We need to admit this fact in order to recover. Addiction is a physical, mental and spiritual disease that affects every area of our lives. The physical aspect of our disease is the compulsive use of drugs: the inability to stop using once we have started. The mental aspect of our disease is the obsession, or overpowering desire to use, even when we are destroying our lives. THE SPIRITUAL PART OF OUR DISEASE IS OUR TOTAL SELF-CENTEREDNESS...We are not responsible for our disease, but we are responsible for our recovery...Help for addicts begins only when we are able to admit complete defeat...We have found hope. We can learn to function in the world in which we live. We can find meaning and purpose in life and be rescued from insanity, depravity and death. (from “Step One” in Chapter 4 (How It Works) of the Basic Text, Fifth Edition)

Answers to Monthly Quiz:

1. 1982. Work on the Basic Text began in 1977.
2. 1988. Four revisions in six years, not bad.
3. 2008. Lots of new stories in this edition, in an attempt to better represent the global fellowship.
4. No. The poor addicts getting clean then had to wait an entire year between their 1 year chip (yes, they were once chips rather than keytags) and their 2 year chip. They had to walk 2 miles to meetings as well, uphill both ways. ☺

Recovery Haiku:

Squirrels chattering
On lawn strewn with golden leaves
Clean again today.

REMINDER: SEND SUBMISSIONS TO
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