



Straight Hope

Montgomery Area Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter

August 2016

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August/September Anniversaries			
Name	Yrs	Celebrating at...	Date
Joey B.	5	Oasis	8/1
Charmaine	20	Good Deal	8/6
Mike D	1	S.O.S.	8/6
Josh M	6	Today's Recovery	8/7
John Boy	20	Older Toddlers	8/12
Mike F	12	Get Down Group	8/19
Steve W.	28	Good Deal	8/27
Barry S	31	Keys to Recovery	9/5
Steve R	25	Good Deal	9/27

Time does not equal recovery.

One day at a time I did not use. One day at a time adds up. I gathered time. I changed nothing else in my life. I thought about steps, talked about some steps. I had sponsors, kind people who listened and told me to keep coming back. I saw myself as a victim, and believe me I was. But in that I took no responsibility for my part, for my side of the street. And I acted out in behaviors that altered me but did not involve a chemical. For years and years and years. And I blamed these behaviors on others; they MADE me.

My abstinent life, at 10 years, became completely and totally unmanageable and where it took me...I guess sometimes to learn stuff you have to have to be in enough pain. I developed so much anger, such a case of the fuckits. I HATED. I hated others and myself, but I didn't get that I created this world. This reality is on me. I still acted out. When I had lost my home, lost my animals, mom dis-owned me, I went to a bar. Stood outside smoked several cigarettes and said to myself "You wanna die? Go in. Go in. Why do you care?" But I still had a clean date. The one thing I had. Couldn't go in. Wanted to die clean.

Shit had to change, and it took time. Got a sponsor who called me on my shit. That surprised me; I'm a VICTIM! !! Apparently I'm also an adult who has a huge mess to clean up, and I need to work on it daily. Got assignments and worked on them like my life was at stake. It was. As time passed I wanted to be someone I would like. I wanted to be trustworthy and responsible. I wanted conversations to not always revolve around me. Let others be important. I know deep down I'm kind and I like being helpful. I got jobs to that effect.

I believe that sometimes to truly work a step life has to show up. That tends to suck but such is life. I am grateful for my past. I learned so much the hard way. But I learned it. I am different but I think some of the good parts flourished during the craziness and survived. Oh, and I have been restored to sanity. Never EVER thought that possible. My take is I think and feel crazy crazy stuff, but I still do the next right thing. And the behaviors I acted out... it's been 3 years since and I treat them as using And I don't use today. I am clean today, not just abstinent. I work a program. I pray. And most days I am grateful, even on hard days, 'cause I'm still breathing; I'm above ground; I have life.
Just for today...
Thanks

Anonymous

Experience, Strength and Hope

Hi, I'm Christy and I am an addict. My original clean date is 3/17/88. I made the decision to leave NA with a bottle of Amaretto 9/16/2002. I have to look at a calendar to remember when I came back to NA, clean, it's 6/29/14.

My first run in NA was exciting. I did it all - Meetings every night, conventions, hanging out, speaking at conventions, leading a ton of meetings, chairing meetings, starting the Montgomery Area with my best friend. I got divorced, twice, started a business, lost a business, had multiple jobs, had money, lost money, got sick, got better, went to therapy, helped a ton of people. I wrote an article that was published in the NA Way magazine. I had sponsors and sponsored folks.

So what went wrong? They say you pick up way before you actually use. I am also addicted to relationships. Any relationship will do. I got involved with a newcomer. I would listen to NO ONE. I moved out of state with him leaving my cherished friends and NA, my children and the profession I loved so much. All to be married to the newcomer. That lasted 18 months. While I was in New England, my husband had me committed to a locked down psyche unit. I had ten years clean! How could this be possible? In that hospital I learned that I am simply an addict. I'm not mentally deranged. Nor am I severely mentally ill. Not long after being discharged from there...it was in Vermont, lovely view out the barred windows... My higher power decided it was time for me to come home to MD. This was not a conscious decision! I got in my car with no brakes, no insurance, my kid's pictures and my grandmothers teacups. I was home in record time getting to a Saturday morning meeting just as it started. I sat next to a dear friend, Robert, who just hugged me and asked "Are you done yet?" I had not yet connected the disease to relationships yet.

I was humiliated at what I had done. I slowly moved away from the folks I so dearly loved. I still was in NA, clean, but going to different meetings and not letting anyone close. I slowly gave up all my service positions.

I met a man at work. This one had to be healthy because he was not 'in the program'. I saw it was a chance to be 'normal'. He was a beer drinker. What could go wrong here? He's not a raging addict. As the relationship progressed I went to less and less meetings. I had convinced myself if I continued the recovery thing, he would not want to continue the relationship. Of course I never talked to him about that.

That fateful Saturday I woke up done with being in the program. Convinced myself that my life was just as unmanageable clean as it had been years before using, I talked to my boyfriend about it, asked him what he thought about me leaving NA and just drinking. He said "Recovery is so much a part of you, are you sure you want to leave it?" I said "Screw it; I'm not getting anything out of it anymore." I did tell him that if I got too insane to take me to the nearest detox. Well, that never happened. I drank myself silly that night. I loved it. So, I drank every night for many months after that ... I quickly lost my corporate job. Something that was totally a gift of recovery. They let me go like two months after that first drink. They said I had an attitude that did not fit the culture of the business any longer. Screw Them! Their loss I remember thinking.

So, the using progressed from booze to weed to narcotic pain pills. Somewhere in there we got married. That will fix everything right? There is a lot of insanity in those years between that first bottle of Amaretto and the last bottle of pills. Most of it totally internal insanity. I didn't get arrested, other than the job, I didn't lose anything material, and I kept my family. I even managed to do some cool things that I would have never done. In the end my world was nothing. NOTHING. Unemployable, totally depressed, waiting to die. Not suicidal, just tortured by life. No friends, no social life at all. Just lying on a couch, strung out on narcotics maintaining with weed...

(Continued on page 4)

A Letter from the Editor: Regarding *M.O.M. & P.O.P.*

Dear Readers,

Due to a shortage of problems, there is no column from **Mom & Pop** (hereinafter referred to as **M** and **P**) this month. However, **M** and **P** are still really willing to help – well, at least **P** is. And **M** is always willing to put in her miserable two cents. Since they are on this sabbatical, I thought that I would take this opportunity to comment on their column.

When they first submitted it to me I was aghast. I didn't want suffering addicts to be advised to do things like "tell a sponsee off who upsets you and then fire her" or "stamp your feet on the ground and mutter 'yeah, yeah, yeah, get it over with' when someone shares too long in a meeting. But the two of them assured me that the "**My Own Misery**" side of the column was to provide comic relief, to help the addict see the funny side of things, and that the "**Principles over Personality**" side is where the advice gets real and gives recovery-based suggestions. I'm not sure I'm 100% convinced but for now, when they return from sabbatical (which will coincidentally occur when the next request for advice comes in or they stop arguing over who is the better columnist), I will continue to give them just enough rope to... well, actually, all the rope I've got.

I would love to hear what you think about it, so direct your feedback to Editor@StraightHopeTheyWriteToMe.org. **JUST KIDDING!** There's no such domain or email address. But you can write me at zfouant@gmail.com until someone in Area Service gives me a generic email address. I'm sure that will happen soon; I've only been asking for a year now. I work for the government, so I understand.

It has been delightful to write to you. I hope the occasion will come again soon, especially if you do send a Letter to the Editor that can then be printed and a response given. In the meantime, don't forget that **M** and **P** really do want to help you. All questions to them are treated with confidentiality. You may submit your question anonymously or with a first name/initial – however you wish. Please send your submissions to zfouant@gmail.com.

Thanks for letting me serve!

Puzzle: How do you get from USING to CLEAN in 12 steps?

- Step 1: USING
Step 2: Take yourself ("U") out of the equation: SING
Steps 3-10, change one letter at a time (for the reader to fill in), e.g.
Step 3: _____
Step 4: _____
Step 5: _____
Step 6: _____
Step 7: _____
Step 8: _____
Step 9: _____
Step 10: _____
Step 11: LEAN
Step 12: Now you can see ("C") : Add "C" : CLEAN

Meeting Notes:

Step Working Addicts Group needs a coffee maker, GSR and Treasurer.

Convention 2017 Information

Host Committee Meets
every 3rd Monday at 7 PM
Montgomery Hills Baptist Church,
9727 Georgia Ave,
Silver Spring, MD 20910
More information is available at
<http://cprcna.org/wp/>

ANSWER: USING SING DINE DONE LANE LAND LEND LEAD LEAN, clean

Experience, Strength and Hope (Cont'd)

I didn't drink anymore because that makes me obviously insane! My husband was on the misery path right beside me. One thing led to another and we both bottomed out together. I wanted to die and he was not far behind me. He found NA first. Well... I kinda directed him there. Imagine that. He got clean in spring of 2014. I stopped the narcotics when he got clean but kept smoking weed. Chronic pain was my excuse. Going to meetings high, wanting to be high, and always focused on the next high.....SUCKS. In late June 2014 I decided to go to the meeting the next day clean. I got a sponsor that day. Started calling even though I DID NOT WANT TO. I read what she told me to read even though I told her I knew it all. She was awesome and told me I knew so much I was strung out detoxing... humbling to say the least. I did what she said. Went to meetings she told me to go to. Read the crap she told me to. Most of all I didn't use ANYTHING. I went to Women's meetings, I went to Annapolis an hour from my house in rush hour traffic, I went to A-Anon. I went to AA... I DID NOT WANT TO. The point is I did stuff that I did not want to do. All of my being did not want to do it! After about 6 months I needed NA, my home. So, I went to meetings I had gone to when I was clean the first time. Picked up chips and made a feeble attempt to talk to people. Got an NA sponsor. I felt at home in NA. With my people. I felt so ashamed for walking away years before. So ashamed. That first year totally totally sucked. The second year got better. Now, into the third year, I am so grateful I can't even describe it. I am actually able to help folks, I am actually able to help myself! I am employed again...out of the blue, hired on text message... go figure. I'm still married to the man I met at work, 13 years. We are both in recovery. Our relationship has changed OMG so much! No running this time. Facing life on life's terms and being a grown up. My kids are constantly telling us how much different we are. Constantly. That's usually a good sign when the kids are cheering for you! I feel like a new person, totally different than ever. I feel like I surrender daily to a higher power that will keep me from feeding the disease that so badly wants me miserable. That damn disease is tricky, sneaky. Looking back it is so clear but while I was in the midst of it all, CLEAN before I picked up, I was totally blind to it. I am so grateful NA is still here and that I have been welcomed home with open arms. "An addict, any addict, can stop using, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live"

Christy

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Area Service Committee</i> Montgomery Area Service Committee meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM at Silver Spring Presbyterian Church, 580 University Blvd East</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>C&P Regional Service Committee</i> Next Meeting: Grace United Church of Christ, Frederick, MD Flyer</p>
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Name

Signature

Date