



the NORVANA

SCOOP

August 2018



“Serenity is what we get when we quit hoping for a better past”

- Unknown

for the NEWCOMER

carrying THE MESSAGE

The 12 Steps *in plain English*

1. Drugs will kill me
2. There's a power that wants me to live
3. Do I want to live or die?
(if you want to die, stop here)
4. Write about how I got to where I am
5. Tell another person all about me
6. Want to change
7. Ask a power greater than me to help me change
8. Write down who I've hurt
9. Fix what I can without hurting anyone else
10. Accept that I'm human and will screw up – fix it immediately
11. Ask a power greater than me to show me how to live
12. Keep doing 1 through 11 and pass it on

The Moment of Clarity

- Michael F.

I grew up in a privileged household; my parents were both doctors. My long struggle with addiction began with alcohol when I was about age twelve. I first used opioid pain medication at age 16, like many of the people I spent time with in high school. By age 18, I stopped using opioids because I went to college. I didn't use for about one and a half years, until I got incredibly sore after sports practice one day. I called a friend and asked him if he knew where to obtain some drugs. I started to use. The guy my friend introduced me to became my drug dealer and I started to run (sell) drugs for him soon thereafter. Only a few months after this began, my father caught me. I stole my father's prescription book out of his car. He always kept the prescription books under lock and key, but that time was an exception. I was looking for it, and I was able to steal it. I had a dealer who would pay me \$200 per prescription and suddenly I had 75 blank prescriptions in my hand. At that point, my parents already knew about my addiction problem, so they were also watching me closely. My sister had already previously found one of my pill bottles and found about four different kinds of pills inside. Of course she reported me to our parents.

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THE MESSAGE *cont.*

My father caught me before I could use any pages of his prescription pad. My father explained to me (in full length) how that action could have cost him his medical license and his job. A very awkward summer followed, where I spent time going to a suboxone maintenance program. I got 24 mg three times a day. I was not able to taper off suboxone for even 36 hours before I went out to sell my medication for drugs. There was no way that I could keep financing my pill addiction, so I turned to heroin and then later to crack. I used both of those drugs intravenously.

I knew what it would take for me to get clean. I knew how recovery would be. I was not ready take that step.

It wasn't fear of the unknown— I simply enjoyed my life with the drugs and wanted to stay there. In my head, the drugs were not the problem. I thought the problem was the money. If I only could have enough money, all would be fine. I pawned things, stole things and did many crazy things. I believed that I only did those things because I had no money and my addiction was not to blame. I believed that for the longest time.

I spent time in a total of 13 treatment centers before I was able to get clean and sober. The last time I called my parents from a treatment facility to tell them that I was back in treatment, they replied with a disinterested, "Yeah, okay, that's good." They had become so numb to it.

I always idolized my father. On that day I could hear in his voice that they had given up on me. That was my turning point. That was it. I asked myself, "What am I doing?" for the first time. I was 24 years old at the time. I was not afraid of death—I was afraid to grow older and not have anything, not even my parents.

When I got clean in October 2010, I had no money, no car, no job. I had nothing. I finished my steps in about four months. After doing my steps, I had totaled my car, had no money, had no job, and had just signed a lease for an apartment that I was financially obligated to keep.



So I actually was somehow in a worse situation than before. What changed was my perception about it. I knew that I would be okay, and was totally fine with myself at that time.

From that point on, my life has grown. All I did was take in suggestions. I did everything that people told me to do. As a result, my life has changed. I have a car, money, a girlfriend, a dog, a job, and a house. My dad is my best friend today; I talk to him every day. I love my mom and talk to her as often as possible, too. My parents live still in New Jersey, where I'm originally from, but they come to visit me often.

I had never any reason to use drugs or alcohol. At times I just didn't like how I felt about myself. My childhood was great, my family is fantastic, I have not experienced any trauma. I just craved the drugs and loved the way they make me feel. Not today.

Today I love to run, stay active, eat well, play with my dog, enjoy life, my work, my friends, my family, my girlfriend. I go to meetings and talk to my sponsor every day.

If someone in your family is affected by addiction, try to understand why they do what they do, but love them anyway. It's the love that changes a person's life. Speak the language of the heart.



5 WAYS TO MAKE FRIENDS IN RECOVERY

1. LOOK FOR FRIENDS THAT ALIGN WITH YOUR SPIRIT, NOT JUST YOUR CLEAN TIME

One of the keys to expanding your network is not qualifying someone based solely on their clean date. Look for whether your life paths are aligned. Friendships founded in a shared interest of things that make you come alive tend to be more rewarding.

2. PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE

The fear of rejection is a powerful fear that many of us share in the rooms. Our initial lack of self-confidence can be crippling, but it has been said that we miss 100% of the shots we don't take. So sign up for that art class you've been wanting to take, volunteer at the animal shelter in your neighborhood, or join the gym. Service is also a great way to meet other people in recovery. We must take risks in order to further our lives and expand our worlds.

3. EXPAND YOUR MEETINGS

We've all met many friends in the rooms of NA, but recovery meetings don't end there. Broaden your scope and try SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, or AA. There are online meetings such as In The Rooms, Women in Recovery, and Soberistas. There are even yoga classes that incorporate the 12-Steps. Even if you find that these meetings aren't your thing, there is always a chance to meet new friends.

4. TRY MEETUP

Meet-up.com is an online forum that enables people with similar interests to find one another and meet in person to partake in them. There are thousands of Meetups, from yoga to hiking to professional networking to coding to baking. You can search your local area and use key words like "recovery", or "non-drinkers". Meetup allows you the opportunity to find friends that don't center their lives around using.

5. PATIENCE (AND PERSEVERANCE) PAYS

Remember that all good things take time. Give yourself time to become grounded in your recovery, learn about yourself, and try not to demand an immediate banging social life. Our literature says it perfectly: "social acceptability does not equal recovery."



upcoming EVENTS

- 11 AUG** Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Service Committee Mtg
⌚ Saturday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm
📍 Fairlington Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, VA
- 11 AUG** Dulles Corridor Picnic
⌚ Saturday, 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm
📍 Algonkian Park, Sterling, VA
- 11 AUG** Jump Start to Recovery: All White Affair Dance
⌚ Saturday, 9:00pm – 1:00 am
📍 St Martins Church, Washington DC
- 30 AUG-2 SEPT** World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous 37
⌚ Thursday, 10:00 am – Sunday, 10:00 am
📍 Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL

INSPIRATION

from our literature

“The search for a God of our own understanding is one of the most important efforts we will undertake in our recovery. We have complete personal choice and freedom in how we understand our Higher Power. We can each find a Higher Power that does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Because we are powerless over our addiction, we need a Power greater than ourselves to help us.”
— Narcotics Anonymous, It Works: How and Why

call the HELPLINE

Ready to quit? We can help
1-800-543-4670



“that no addict seeking recovery need ever die...”

do you have IDEAS?

Submit your comments, concerns, opinions, experiences, art work, etc. to:
norvananewsletter
@cprna.org

comedy CORNER

