



Straight Hope

Montgomery Area Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter
September 2017

There is no chemical solution to a Spiritual Problem

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What's Happening in September

Annual Cookout & Dance

Saturday Sept. 16th from Noon to 10pm

Sponsored by Progress in NA, Wednesday
Willingness & Mondays Miracles
Sligo Creek Rec Center 500 Sligo Ave Silver Spring

H&I Learning Day

Saturday Sept. 30th from Noon to 3pm

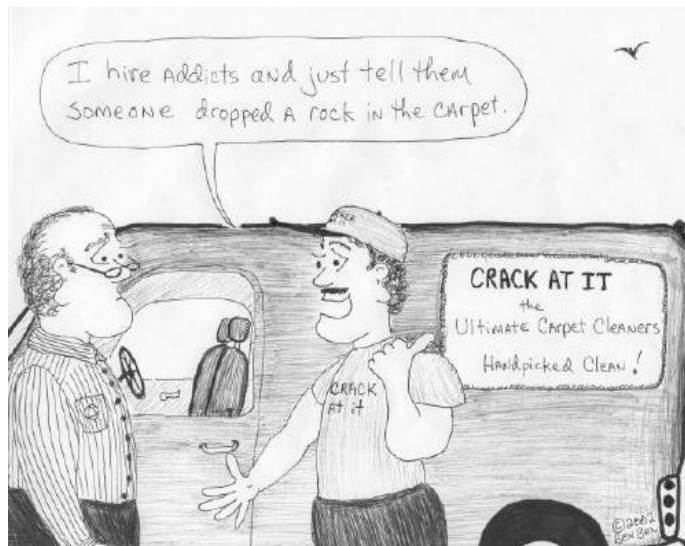
There will be speakers from each region sharing
their experience in H&I with Free Food & Drinks
Cabin John Park 7400 Tuckerman Ln Bethesda

**Don't miss these great events to be a part of
something greater than ourselves**



[Send your emails to:
moco.news@cprna.org](mailto:moco.news@cprna.org)

**IF I FAIL TO
CHANGE THE
PERSON I WAS
WHEN I CAME
IN... THAT
PERSON WILL
TAKE ME OUT!**



A Little Recovery Humor By Ben C

www.recoverycartoons.com/favs/favtoons.shtml

September Anniversaries/Celebrations

Anthony C	2	Recovery & Relapse	9/1
Scott B	2	Late Night	9/1
Mary Margaret B	10	Good Deal	9/2
Barry S	32	Keys to Recovery	9/4
Michelle N	6	Girls Night Out	9/7
Jim W	11	Older Toddlers	9/7
Meaghan	1	Back To Basics	9/8
Mitch T	33	Solo Por Hoy	9/8
Erin D	2	Oasis	9/11
Nick B	24	The Alternative	9/10
Aaron S	14	All About Change	9/12
Dave K	32	Another Way	9/13
Belinda M		Speak Easy	9/16
Beverly L		Speak Easy	9/16
Jay G	2	Today's Recovery	9/17
Alyse M	4	Girls Night Out	9/21
Geoff K	2	Live and Let Live	9/22
Steve R	26	Good Deal	9/23

Send us an email and post your Announcements &
Anniversaries here at:

moco.news@cprna.org

MONTHLY FOCUS STEP 9

"We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

The Ninth Step is an action Step. It is a Step in which our commitment to our new NA way of life needs to become evident in our daily living emphasizing the focus on our current personal relationships. We need to start treating the other people in our life today with compassion, acceptance and love. What we are looking for the results we want from working the Ninth Step in our life today are nothing short of gaining a greater new confidence and a certainty that this new NA way of life that we have chosen to live by is really true and effective. That is we "amend" our current behavior the result can be a greater "peace of mind" which will then help us to better apply Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelfth.

How we earn our living, how we look at other people and how we provide for those who depend on us must all change in time. Helping others to heal gives us a steady flow of unforeseen breakthroughs and self-awareness. Areas in which we need help that might have been invisible to us for the rest of our lives, will often snap into focus if we see someone else making a similar mistake. We may say, "Oh, no!" when we see them doing what we do, but our whole lives begin to change. Perhaps we should say, "Oh, yes!" Many times these are the little life lessons we should have learned as children but we missed out on them while we were in active addiction. While other people were experiencing life, we were out to lunch. Healing for us is filling those areas we missed out on and moving into those areas where we've never been before.

The 12 Steps of recovery give us a refresher course in life. The spiritually inexperienced person may perceive the process to be an illogical bunch of hocus pocus. Fear and superstitious dread play a role in preventing our growth. We dread change and have trouble believing change will be for the better! As a member of NA, we each have the important right to our own belief systems. We accept, appreciate and fully understand that if we don't believe something, it will not work for us. If you think you don't believe - yet find something working - one possibility is that we have an unconscious belief that is strong enough to produce results.

Much has been written about putting closure on past harm done to others. Putting closure on past occurrences that don't involve real injury but just misunderstanding can heal and repair past acts that are continuing in some way. We complete them first in our minds by admitting the truth and communicating it where possible. A phone call, email, a letter, a personal visit or just our willingness will do what is needed to complete the act and keep it from casting a shadow over our present. Without making amends, our past will produce our future. What we change today, changes the balance of our lives.

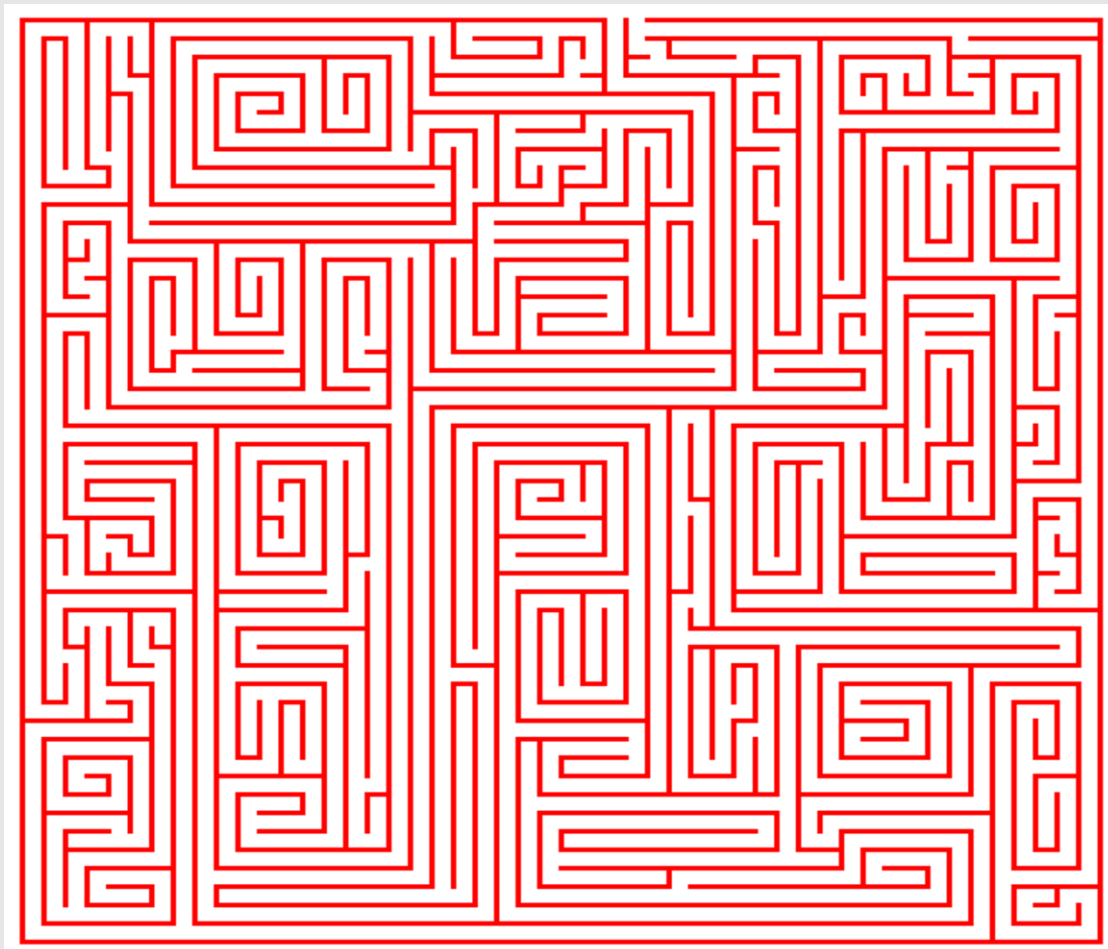
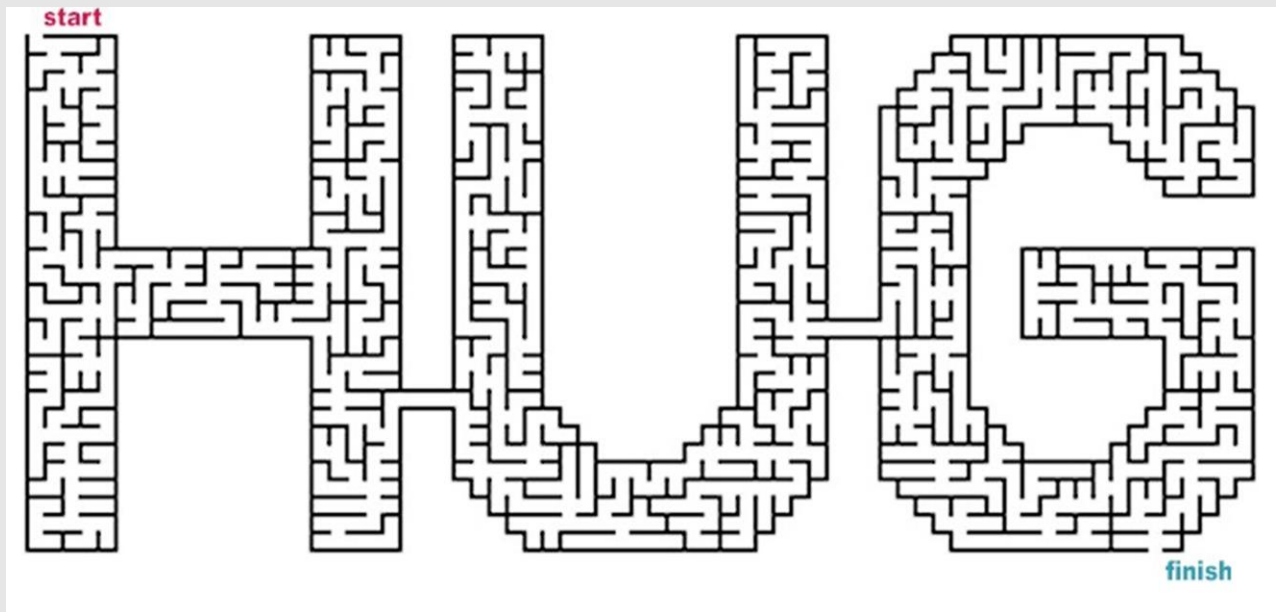
This may be difficult to recognize especially when we lack some of the sensations that other people might experience. Our best move is to focus on our belief and let it become more clear over time. Sometimes the belief of another we love and trust can help us get started. But we have to walk enough of the mile alone to call it our own experience. Otherwise, our foundation is not based on experience and may crumble and fall. Prepare for it like any other journey. Start praying and expecting results. Focus forward on your newfound belief and not back to the unworkable past. Clean and healthy, lots of things get easy! We encourage one another to be sensible and keep spirituality simple. We know the time will come when each of us wishes to expand the peace we begin to feel inside by canceling out elements of our past by making amends.

Practical spirituality emphasizes our spiritual experiences. As our experience grows, we increase our capacity to share. On the Ninth Step, we only put people on our list when we gain the awareness of our need for freedom from those 'bad feelings' that we cannot otherwise resolve. We aren't looking to complicate matters so we don't go looking for trouble. We simply need to wipe out some more of the leftover pain from our active addiction. The Twelve Steps deal with these internal issues and help us establish a solid spiritual foundation. Where a serious problem actually exists, common sense generates a prudence that cautions us to go slowly and ask others for help. We should consult our sponsors instead of plunging wildly ahead. Many have made the decisions to go ahead alone and some have paid a dear price. Remembering the slogan, "Easy Does It" is most appropriate in this Step.

NA says "Take it Easy" because when we push things, we break things. Some of us use the concept, "When in doubt – Don't" and call our sponsors or get to a meeting to get a reality check. We continue to apply ourselves until we get the relief we seek. We have found we can't go forward without breaking these ties to the past.

How It Works: 12 Steps , Narcotics Anonymous; Way of Life 2012.

N A-Mazing Recovery Path



The Fun Page

ADDICTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH & HOPE

That One Fragile Hour

What a night. After a day of service meetings, four of us went out for dinner and a meeting. We rolled into the meeting place parking lot in a white van like a treatment center crew, but the four of us have been doing service together off and on for almost 30 years. We swapped stories and a shared love of NA all evening. One of the guys in our group was the speaker, and he rocked it. It was a joy to watch a room of mostly LA kids nodding and laughing in recognition even though most of them hadn't even been born yet when the speaker got clean. He shared his feelings and perceptions of finding NA in his native country when NA was still new there, and not a single piece of NA literature had yet been translated into his language. The odds were stacked pretty heavily against his ever living this long, never mind his being here to tell the tale of a life transformed by that fragile and magical first hour in a basement with three other wacky people who shared from the heart in an effort to give him some hope. He got enough hope at that first NA meeting to stay clean and show up at the next meeting, and later at those early translation committee meetings, the World Service Conference a few years later (where all four of us first met), and all the service boards and committees on which he has been asked to serve ever since. He left out a lot of those specific service details from his story tonight, but none of it was lost on me.

What a team effort NA is, each of us weaving our little thread into this amazing fabric. And what a privilege it is to have witnessed so many of these dedicated, anonymous journeys for decades, and to now have a life in recovery that rests on the efforts of people whose lives I didn't witness and will never know.

We went to tonight's meeting because I was giving Roger (not his real name) a cake for 25 years. We met at a meeting when Roger had about 90 days clean and was nearly ready to give up on NA. Back then, he believed all he was getting at meetings and from NA people were pat, formulaic responses to issues that he felt were a lot more complex. He was at a point of thinking (and saying), "Screw this place, with all the God talk and clichés and superficial answers." He went to the meeting that night and spilled all this in a sort of long-finger swan song to what was then his latest in a seven-year string of short runs at recovery followed by relapse. He was fully prepared to once again walk away rather than swallow this vacuous crap. No one seemed to want to hear him talk about what he saw as the pressing, deep issues swirling within him; instead, as he saw it, they brushed him off with formulaic answers.

I was listening to all this from across the room that night so many years ago, seeing myself seven years before that, experiencing the same battle. Again, it was that fragile hour in which life could turn in a couple of radically different directions. I grabbed him after that meeting 25 years ago, and told him I got exactly what he was saying, and that I would be glad to get together and completely exhaust any issues he wanted to tackle. He was a little taken aback by that response. We talked for a long time until I had to go home, and we made plans to get together the next day. We did that, and we delved into every issue weighing on him during that and many subsequent conversations, and a long sponsorship relationship was born. I watched him for the next ten years, before I moved away from the area, as he sponsored wobbly newcomers, nursing along those fragile turning-point moments and coaching guys into stepwork and service with love, wisdom, and skill. Another thread in the hammock you and I swing in today in such relative repose—born of fragile moments when one of us extended our heart to another and blew on that flickering spark of hope, sustaining the little flame for another day.

This is actually the reality you and I have been given as the gift of a lifetime. When tonight's meeting was over and I was walking alone down the hotel hallway toward my room, I was whispering to myself, "I am blessed. I am a rich man." And that I am. I need to slow it down once in a while and look right at that. You and I are living a lifestyle in which miracles are born in fragile moments, fragile hours in our home groups when that quiet person on the edge of the circle, oblivious to the bonanza they just hit when they walked through our door, could still go either way. A small act of love and attention after the meeting, an almost imperceptible current of energy extended, can literally transform a life— and with it the lives of parents, kids, siblings, grandparents, and on outward in concentric, rippled circles. Not everyone gets to live a life so richly packed with this kind of possibility. We do.

What a tapestry we weave together. May you all get to be weavers for decades, and see the patterns form through the relationships that make up those threads. "Not only is this way of life better than the hell we lived, it is better than any life we have ever known. We have found a way out, and we see it work for others. Each day, more will be revealed." (Basic Text, "More Will Be Revealed") Ron H, New Mexico



Create a recovery toolbox

The goal of having a recovery toolbox is to have various options of coping skills so that when you are in intense distress, you have something to choose from to keep you grounded and on the right track. Too often, when we are in distress, we run out of ideas resorting to unhealthy habits compromising our recovery.

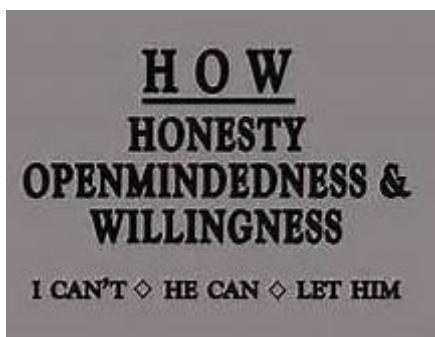
It is not easy to find happiness in ourselves, and it is not possible to find it elsewhere.

So how then do we find happiness?

I love quotes so when I read the one above by a famous biographer in American History, Agnes Repplier it really hit home in regards to my recovery process. The next question I asked was how then do we find it? Happiness. As our literature is full of and emphasizes over and over it is accomplished through change and the help to do so! Help can come from many different sources such as Mother Nature, God, the group, Buddha, your Sponsor a Shaman or Guru. Whatever source of guidance and positive change yours is it may change from time to time.

I have found myself facing internal demons alone and unable to call someone for encouragement and at that time my higher power changes. Help for me many times will come from our slogans. When my disease is gnawing at me to use something, anything to numb my mind from the obsessive thoughts in order to shut it the fuck up. An NA Slogan will pop up in my mind like a billboard sign all lit up saying focus on the message and it'll get better, I promise!

We all need reminders and encouragement that those before worked so tirelessly to carry the message to the still suffering addict.



So remember "Easy Does It" we need you to "stick and stay"! Change doesn't happen overnight but by the choices we make moment to moment. This doesn't mean we're not responsible for ourselves. We are. But we aren't in this alone.

As one addict put it when sharing about recovery and her higher power "Recovery is not a do-it-yourself project. We don't have to become overly concerned about changing ourselves. We can do our part, relax, and trust that the changes we'll experience will be right for us."

Recovery means we don't have to look to other people as our source to meet our needs. They can help us, but they are not the source.

As we learn to trust the recovery process, we start to understand that a relationship with our Higher Power is no substitute for relationships with people. We don't need to hide behind religious beliefs or use our relationship with a Higher Power as an excuse to stop taking responsibility for ourselves and taking care of ourselves in relationships. But we can tap into and trust a Power greater than ourselves for the energy, wisdom, and guidance to do so. *Melodie B*



Area Service Meeting Notes

- The Alternative –Need Support, Donations are low
- Making A Difference – Home group members needed
- Meeting Relocation: Gentleman’s Club Relocated Epworth United Methodist Church Address 9008 Rosemont Dr Gaithersburg Wednesdays 7:30-8:30pm
- A Call for Speakers at the next CPRNA XXXII Convention “Surgery of the Spirit” Ocean City April 13-15, 2018
Submit your CD or email the recording by September 14th Deadline to: cprcna32program@gmail.com
Or Mail to: CPRCNA XXXII-Program Subcommittee PO Box 78121 Washington, DC 20013 Be sure and remember to include your Speaker Contact Information.
Clean Time Requirements: 8 years clean time for Main Speakers
5 years clean time for Workshop Speakers
1 year clean for Workshop Secretary
- September 15 – 17, 2017 Recovery Retreat - Tri County Area Unity Annual Retreat XI will be at Lions Camp Merrick 3650 Rick Hamilton Place Nanjemoy, MD 20662 For lodging details and registration information visit www.cprna.org/events for information about the campgrounds visit www.lionscampmerrick.org
- November 24 – 26, 2017 FSRANA XXV Plant The Seed For Recovery 25th Anniversary held at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Baltimore/Hunt Valley MD To register visit <http://www.fsrcna.org> Convention Information: Liz L. 443-451-5418



Share your story, poetry, experience art, drawings or how recovery works for you.
Email submissions to moco.news@cprna.org

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NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

STRAIGHT HOPE
CHRISTINE H.