



Straight Hope

Montgomery Area Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter
November 2017

We are either working on recovery or we're working on a relapse

Inside This Issue

Anniversaries	1
Events	1
Recovery Inspiration Quotes & Humor	1
Monthly Focus: Step 11	2
Share on Meditation & Recovery	3
Area/Regional Notes	4
Right to Publish Form	4

What's Happening

Unity Day Dance Saturday, Nov 4th 6p-10p
St. Luke's Center 4925 East Capitol St. SE DC
Free Food, Fun, Fellowship & Fabulous Music

Speaker Jam & Dance Friday, Nov 10th
Noon-9pm Speakers / Dance 9pm-1am
St. Martin's Catholic Church 1901 North Capitol
St. NW Washington, DC

Norvana Thanksgiving Marathon Meeting
Nov 23rd 10am-10pm
Food, Fun & Fellowship
Grenbrier Baptist Church
5401 7th Rd S Arlington VA

FSRCNA XXV - Plant the Seed for Recovery
Nov. 24-26, 2017 Hunt Valley, MD
For Information visit <http://www.fsrcna.org>

WCNA37 - "The Magic Is Still Real"
2018 World Convention of NA Aug 30 - Sep2
Orange County Convention Center
9800 International Dr. Orlando, FL
Register <https://www.na.org/?ID=wcna37-reg>



Send us your Announcements & Anniversaries
moco.news@cprna.org



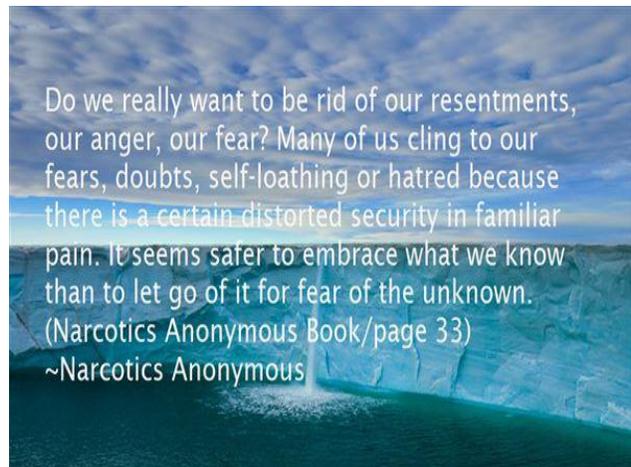
Said "Sober"

A Little Recovery Humor By Ben C

www.recoverycartoons.com/favs/favtoons.shtml

October Anniversaries/Celebrations

Cristen M	14	Girls Night Out	11/2
Anthony W	15	It Works How & Why	11/13
Karen W	9	Meetin' in Wheaton	11/14
Jay S	25	Meetin' in Wheaton	11/14
Lindsay P	5	Serenity in the Park	11/14
James W	26	Speak Easy	11/18
Bernadette H	2	Speak Easy	11/18



MONTHLY FOCUS STEP 11

"We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out."

The first ten steps have set the stage for us to improve our conscious contact with the God of our understanding. Having entered this phase of our spiritual program through practicing the previous ten steps, most of us welcome the exercise of prayer and meditation. Our spiritual condition is the basis for a successful recovery that offers unlimited growth. Many of us really begin to appreciate our recovery when we get to the Eleventh Step. By surrendering control, we gain a far greater power. In a program with a first Step involving surrender, it underscores the quiet surrender of meditation.

Take time out to quiet our restless minds to still our bodies for a while as a time out. In quiet moments of meditation, God's will can become evident to us. Quieting the mind through meditation creates inner peace that brings us into contact with the God within us. The longer we are clean, the more we can see how people act to produce the problems in their lives. Getting away from unnecessary decision making, practicing total abstinence and going to meetings suspends much of the 'problem making process' from earlier. Taking time with others and working the Twelve Steps distracts us from making new problems. Meditation is the only thing a person can do that takes nothing but quiet and the time to sit and gives such tremendous pay off

Most people have moments of quiet reflection. A lady pauses over washing dishes to think about a child's schooling, how her husband is doing and other things in her life. Just taking a moment's pause, now and then, helps us stay on track with our dreams and inner reality. Another person works on their car and listens to the radio. Another man working on an assembly line in Detroit practices meditation while performing a repetitive task for his whole shift. As he works, he drifts off into meditation. Some people turn off the radio on the drive to work or going home and meditate then without calling it meditation. Scholars take hours of reflection after all their classes are done. It can take years for them to solve how best to present the results of their decades of intense learning and training. So much has to be taken into account. Meditation is the most practical science in the world today.

We addicts know how important change is to the rest of our lives. Changing ourselves changes the rest of the world. A little regular meditation for most people is enough to power the rest of their lives. Taking out a little more time for meditation can increase our dreams and potential to expand spiritually; cleansing the rest of our lives. Did you take time today to meditate?

When we sit, relax physically, breathe and focus, we unleash the powers that live inside us. We gradually explore our own hidden reality, the things that power and drive us. Issues can be resolved and conflicts within our being resolved like patiently uncoiling a rope that has become twisted. When we give ourselves the gift of repose that restful awakens will bring us much insight and inner peace. People have unknown oceans and star systems inside them. Things are going to happen which we cannot foresee and is why we need conscious contact with a higher power.

Spiritual adepts are sometimes called 'seers' because of their ability to 'see' meaning into past present and future events. Any of us can improve our ability to 'see.' We admit our limits as well as our willingness to grow in this area. In other words, we must literally 'seek' the ability to clearly 'see' the spiritual reality. We ask for God's help in every area of life while we are learning to use greater powers to better ourselves and make us more nearly fit instruments of a loving God. We learn to assume the attitude of someone who is sincere and believes that prayer will produce results. A myriad of different groups practice meditation outside of Narcotics Anonymous. Nearly all these groups practice a particular religion or philosophy. An endorsement of any of these methods would be a violation of our Traditions. It would also clearly place a restriction on the individual's right to have a God of his/her understanding. Many of us stick to the definition that meditation is simply getting still, quiet and listening for our Higher Power's guidance. This definition allows us to develop spiritually in our own way.

Emotional balance is one of the first results of meditation, and our experience bears this out. Some of us came into the program broken, and hung around for a while, only to find God or salvation in one kind of religious cult or another. It is easy to float back out the door on a cloud of religious zeal and forget that we are addicts with an incurable disease.

Meditation allows us to reconsider some of the things that didn't work for us in the past because they might work today. We can catch errors of judgment brought on by the new choices life offers us and our inexperience at dealing with life in favorable situations. Some visions go way beyond what can be put into words. We study and learn 'heart math' to follow the vision before us. Before engaging the 12th Step process, defects tripped us up at every turn. Meditation replaces medication. Meditation helps us clean up our body chemistry so that the flow of endorphins, serotonin and other body chemicals play a healthy role and we don't go off into internal chemistry binges! A drug is a drug and that includes body drugs.

Bee Keepers Secret

Meditation has always been a subject that has not produced much written experience within NA. While including some generalities about meditation in the Basic Text, much can be shared that is not commonly known. There is a major example of the 'power' of meditation in people who can collect honey from a bee hive without being stung. It so happens that people who exhibit an unusual calm can do this. Others would be stung badly. This is intriguing in a world that demands quantitative evidence.

Over the years, we may have heard it stated many times that meditation would allow us to 'see' the path to follow. We amazingly seemed left in the dark as to how to choose the paths to follow and how to go about this. There are as many meditative techniques as there are people. In NA, we do not promote just one method of meditation above others nor urge all of our members to follow one particular method, just meditate!

http://nawol.org/2012_step11.htm

Meditation & Recovery

I was skeptical of meditation when I first arrived in NA, and for some time into recovery. Being skilled at finding logical rationalization to support my resistance to effort, I adopted a line in the “How It Works” chapter of our Basic Text: “For those of us who do not pray, meditation is our only way of working this step.” I felt unique: I was one who did not meditate, so prayer was my only way of working this Step. As I studied Step Eleven, I asked my sponsor and others, “Why meditate?” The answer is simple: If I want the full benefits of NA, I must be willing to practice the entire program, not just selected parts. Of course, I don’t have to meditate; I can settle for limited benefits of a limited program if I choose. Our literature describes some of these benefits: “Quieting the mind through meditation brings an inner peace” and “emotional balance is one of the first results of meditation.” The Eleventh Step does not say we sought through prayer OR meditation, so I began to practice.

I began shaky and uncertain at first, with the same opening, but narrow, mind with which I began each step. It took almost a year before I recognized subtle, yet profound changes meditation was providing. For me, subtleties don’t often work. I needed complete unmanageability before I could admit I needed help. So it was with meditation. I needed an undeniable and bold experience, and my first such experience was in nature. I was sitting on a bench atop a steep, forested cliff, overlooking a Pacific Ocean sunset. I got quiet, found freedom from my self-centered thought, and became more aware of my surroundings. I felt and heard the loud and powerful driving wind as it came in from the ocean and up the cliffs, through the hair on my arms and head. I smelled the salt of the sea that permeated everything. I saw the energy of this magical place bringing joy to all as couples walked on the beach far below and children played in the water and sand, dogs chased each other, and waves crashed endlessly. I saw the sun sinking, before my eyes, into the distant water. Then, for a brief moment, the sun stopped sinking! Dogs stopped chasing each other, children stopped playing, and couples stopped walking! The constant driving wind, my breath and my heartbeat, stopped—for a moment, an eternal moment.

I knew then, and now, that the wind was not and is not constant. The sound, sights, my heart and feelings, none are constant. The entire reality is beating, in perfect rhythm, I am a part of that beat. I can no longer deny my place in this universe, nor can I deny the value of meditation. My mind opened enough to stand down and allow my spirit to fully experience. I was awake!

Today, meditation is a daily practice. I still have profound experiences, but they are the exception rather than the norm. For the most part, nothing happens—and I am completely at peace with that. I have come to recognize through prayer and meditation that most of the time I am dominated by my selfish, narcissistic, and insatiable ego; however, my ego does not define me. I am blessed with the ability to set aside the demands of ego and enter a state of freedom from self-obsession through the practice of prayer and meditation. My ego is so used to trying to exploit all it encounters that it is generally unaware of my body, except as a tool for gratification. My ego is appalled by my body’s frailty. It does not want to consider the ways of my liver or kidneys. My ego typically orders my body around, like a bully, commanding it to stay faithful to its tasks. Now, in the quiet of meditation, my ego is confused and diminished as it surrenders to nothing more distinguished than inhalation . . . and exhalation . . . inhalation . . . and exhalation. My ego has no recourse except to give up some of its demands on my consciousness. Eventually, I focus on the tremendously unremarkable fact that I am breathing.

The challenge posed by sitting quietly and doing nothing other than existing is extraordinary. I am drawn to distraction as I strive to attend only to my breath. I sense my mind shooting this way and that on its frantic itinerary. When all of my attention is momentarily directed toward my breathing instead of my ego’s incessant demands, it slowly begins to give up some of its claim to my consciousness. I become aware of things that have nothing to do with my usual concerns: my heartbeat, breath, skeleton, limbs, and blood, my true surroundings. The grass is greener, the snow more brilliant. All has stopped for the moment I recognize the rhythm to which I belong—recovery and unity with a loving Higher Power, our planet, and all its inhabitants.

I know I don’t need to meditate, but now I want to. “Without this step, it is unlikely that we could experience a spiritual awakening, practice spiritual principles in our lives or carry a sufficient message to attract others to recovery.” Just for today, I am ever grateful for “the benefit of the spiritual wealth that we have found.” I am awake.

Anonymous

Note: All literature quotations in this article are from the Step Eleven essay in the Basic Text chapter “How It Works.”

HAVE YOU DONE ANY SERVICE WORK LATELY?

There are lots of ways to serve the fellowship...

Choose a subcommittee at the area level or a service position for a group in need,
It's a rewarding experience!

- NA Web Servants Desperately needed to update meeting lists & events
To volunteer send an email: info@cprna.org

Groups in need of support

- Meetin' In Wheaton – Needs Co-Chair, Coffee Maker, & Greeter
- The Alternative – Needs home group members, Donations are low as is attendance
- Making A Difference – Home group members needed

Ocean City Convention April 13-15, 2018 always need volunteers for the many committees required to host such an event. This is a fun way to be of service and get to know people while helping another!

To volunteer contact one of the many committee email's below:

Additional Needs additionalneeds32@cprna.org

Arts & Graphics artsgraphics32@cprna.org

Convention Information information32@cprna.org

Entertainment entertainment32@cprna.org

Hospitality hospitality32@cprna.org

Merchandise merchandise32@cprna.org

Program program32@cprna.org

Registration registration32@cprna.org



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

Right to Publish Disclaimer

This form must be filled out and submitted with any and all articles sent in for publication. Failure to do so may result in your article not being considered for publication.

I hereby give permission to the Montgomery Area newsletter subcommittee to edit (if necessary) and publish my written article without recourse. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are written by individuals and are in no way a reflection of any member of the newsletter staff or NA as a whole. Articles are edited clarity, punctuation and grammar.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

STRAIGHT HOPE
CHRISTINE H.