

WEST VALLEY NA MESSENGER

The “No Matter What” Edition

February 2020

Groups in Need of Support

Room to Grow 255 N Litchfield Road. Goodyear, Vineyard Church **Monday 7pm**

Change of Life 4645 W. Bell Rd., Glendale, Mission Bell UMC, **Thursday, 7 – 8:30, women’s-oriented meeting**

Solutions 10485 S Estella Pkwy. Goodyear, Estrella Mt. Church **Wednesday 7pm**

La Connecta 3948 W Thomas. Phoenix, W. Thomas Baptist Church **Monday and Thursday 7pm**

Miracles in Action (MIA) 7702 N 35th Ave. Rm 7. Phoenix, Bethany Presb. Church **Sunday 4pm**

Journey thru Recovery 9059 W Lake Pleasant Pkwy. (behind CVS) Peoria, **Thursday 7pm**

Addicts in Recovery (AIR) Alleluia Lutheran Church 8444 W Encanto Rd. Phoenix, 85037 **Wed & Sunday 8:00pm**

The Journey Begins 2517 N 107th Ave First Baptist Church, Avondale **Mon 7 - 8pm**

Sanity is Possible 12313 Northwest Grand Avenue, El Mirage **Sunday, Thursday and Saturday at 7 pm**

We Do Recover, 8801 N. 43rd Ave., Phoenix, **Monday thru Friday 7:00 p.m.**

Regardless of ... 3546 E. Thomas Rd. to left of the church, Mt of Olives Church, format changes (and looking for a member to host another meeting) **Friday at 7:30 pm**

The Twelve Steps of NA

Step Two: “We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Step Two wasn't too difficult for me. I always believed in something greater than myself, yet something that can “restore me to sanity” was confusing. Some days I still struggle with that only because I never felt I truly could have sanity back in my life, let alone something else could help me.

But having hope and listening to other addicts and being in the program for some time now, I knew it was

necessary for me to find a way to believe in a power greater than myself. I knew I had to find something greater than myself because I've always believed that nothing could stop me, even in my failures.

When I started believing in the process and quit looking at my differences, a power greater than myself was easier to understand. I started to listen to different ways other people spend quiet time with their higher power in the mornings. Getting up every day in gratitude and speaking to their higher power.

And if you read the literature, I've tried. Not all of it but I read a lot of IPs and I'm starting Step Five. It states there is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery – “an attitude of indifference or intolerance towards spiritual principles.” Open mindedness stands out among our three principles.

When I quit looking for the differences, I started to get into the solution. Believing others in the program and the powerful force they continue to talk about, I have been able to free up space for that higher power. I found that speaking to my higher power allows me to hear myself and better understand what I want and even what I need. That might not sound exactly what your higher power sounds like.

But that action alone is helping me in my process of recovery. In my walk of recovery. In my understanding of recovery. Today, something that loves me and wants the best for me is my higher power. Exactly how that entity, that voice, that higher power works, maybe I don't know.

I know in quiet times where I'm focused, I'm not the separation. I trust the process. I believe process is a higher power. My higher power allows me to act. My program is enhanced, and my recovery has benefited by simply suggesting that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. Help is what I need help, help is what I asked for, and help is what I get.

Whether I believe or not, it said *we* came to believe. I'm still working on it and it has been a fundamental tool that I am benefiting from.

Lance N.

Fellowship Event – NOTE EARLIER TIME

*West Valley Speaker Meeting/Event
March 14, 2020*

*5:30 Speaker meeting and subway sandwiches to follow
3104 W. Glendale Avenue, Phoenix*

*For more info on events in the Valley
<http://www.arizona-na.org> calendar*

Guiding Principles The Spirit of Our Traditions

Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

The voice of NA speaks in unity when we observe our Second Tradition. In NA, we have no “big I’s and little U’s.” All of us have an equal voice. Simply because a person accepts a position of leadership in the group or at the area or the regional level or beyond, that voice holds no more weight than any other member’s voice.

This does not mean we don’t consider their service experience and reflect on that experience and strength; it means we still can hold our own position, even if it’s very different. In NA, we learn to think for ourselves, but not at the expense of unity whenever possible.

Moving away from a “yes/no,” majority rules’ vote, our groups are increasingly embracing consensus-based decisions, where we hear the minority opinion just as clearly as the majority.

In NA, we are an inverted pyramid and our group conscience comes from our base – the groups. Our voices carry from the top (which is the group), up to the area, to region and finally to NA World Services.

When there are group disagreements, we can break temporarily our spirit of unity, or even permanently if disunity causes a group to disband. Our newcomers often remark on our unity after they attend their first meeting. It’s vitally important that our groups display this attitude, even in service.

When we make consensus-based decisions, we listen carefully to those who dissent, discuss further, then try

to make our decisions so the dissenters can support the outcome.

A famous negotiator who works on peace accords throughout the world tells a story of San Bushmen of the Kalahari he visited who used consensus decision making. Fierce hunters, the Bushman hunted with poison-tipped arrows to hunt their game.

With that cultural backdrop, this famous negotiator asked a leader of the Bushmen, “How do you resolve conflict? What do you do when tempers rise, and conflict becomes destructive?” The tribe sits in a circle and talks, and listens, the Bushmen told him. But first, the Bushmen said, “Someone hides the poison arrows.”

How many times have we seen the unity of home group or service meetings pierced by the poison arrows of our tongues? We could learn from the Bushmen by hiding our poison arrows before we speak.

Our steps help us internally and our traditions help us relate to the external environment in which we live. We have leaders in NA – those who exhibit skills that allow our groups and committees to flourish. However, the Second Tradition tells us they are “trusted” servants,” not “governors.”

When we can remain calm in adversity and listen to the needs of all members of the group, we are relying on a Power greater than we are. With that discussion and guidance from a loving Higher Power, we can arrive at better decisions that will benefit NA and keep it strong for years to come.

The Editor

Committee Announcements

Activities Subcommittee

Needs a Treasurer and your support. Only one day clean to get involved in the Activities Subcommittee. If your home group or committee would like to sponsor the monthly speaker meeting and dance, please contact the Activities chair. Contact Alva, Activities Chair.

H&I Subcommittee

Have a few new facilities that *need volunteers*, six months clean requirement. If interested attend H&I meeting the 3rd Saturday of the month at 8:30am before Area meeting. For information, attend the meeting or contact Mary Lou, H&I Chair.

Outreach Subcommittee – The Outreach Subcommittee attends meetings that need support. It

serves as the “outstretched hand of an established NA community to isolated groups and addicts...” (From A Guide to Local Services in NA.) We currently have no chair for this position. Interested? Attend the ASC meeting. It’s a great way to get out to groups you don’t normally attend.

Public Relations Subcommittee

We are always looking for new members who can help with phone outreach to facilities, give presentations to various organizations and help us carry the message to the professional community. We especially need people available during the day for an occasional speaking engagement with a social service or other community organization. We’ll train you!

We meet at 9:30 before the West Valley Area Meeting on the third Saturday of each month. There are many ways to serve. We have an upcoming event at a local Glendale church at noon on a Wednesday where we could use some support.

We really those who are retired or who have flexible hours since we often speak to groups or do presentations during the day. Join us there or at the PR meeting in your area.

The Concepts for NA Service

2nd Concept: “The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.”

The NA service structure has been created by the groups to serve the common needs of the groups. Our fellowship’s service boards and committees exist to help groups share their experience with one another, provide tools which help groups function better, attract new members to group recovery meetings, and carry the NA message further than any single group could carry it alone. Because the groups have created the service structure, they have final authority over all its affairs. By the same token, the groups also have the final responsibility for the support of all its activities. The two go hand in hand.

Ideally, responsibility and authority are flip sides of the same coin; the exercise of one is also an exercise of the other. When our groups provide the resources—conscience and ideas, people, money—needed to fulfill NA services, they also provide direction to the service structure. Let’s take a look at a few examples of how this principle works.

The most important resource contributed to the service structure by an NA group is almost exclusively spiritual: its ideas and its conscience. Without the voice of the groups, the service structure may not know what kinds of services are needed, or whether the services it provides are ones the groups want. The groups provide the ideas and direction needed to guide the service structure in fulfilling its responsibilities. By voicing their needs and concerns, the groups also exercise their authority for the service structure they have created.

The people who give their time to service work are a vital resource; without them, our service boards and committees would not exist, much less be able to serve. The group’s responsibility to the service structure is to elect a group service representative who will serve the best interests of the group and the entire NA Fellowship. By carefully selecting its GSR, then providing that person with regular support and guidance, the group exercises its ability to impact NA services, both directly and indirectly. In choosing a qualified GSR, then sending him or her out to serve on the group’s behalf, the group fulfills a large part of both its responsibility and authority for NA services.

Abridged from *Twelve Concepts for NA Service*

A Newcomer’s Beautiful Perspective

As a newcomer, I still have trouble trusting fully in NA. In my past, I have blindly believed in the ideas of the world around me (misinformation from misinformed people), and all this led to was emotional suffering. My self-hatred was so extreme, my sole focus in life became to make my emotional pain go away and I cared about nothing else. The result: I desperately sought something to ease the hurt, and I truly believed that the solution would be something outside of me. At least, this is what my addict-brain had me believe, so for the first part of my life, I switched between addictions (drugs, men, food, even school etc.), hoping to find what I thought I needed.

With those ideas as my only driving force, my life fell apart. All those external fixes never worked for very long, so in desperation I found the rooms of NA. However, after years of trust-falling into the arms of my addiction, I didn’t go into NA fully believing I wouldn’t be dropped again. Simply, I had hope it would work because, honestly, I had nowhere else to go.

I skeptically entered the rooms, needing to know *why* this would work before I could fully become a member. Without this ultimate question answered, I felt like I was being brain-washed into following a cult that would

ultimately lead me right back to the terrible place I always seemed to fall. Gratefully, “Narcotics Anonymous offers only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction” (Basic Text, page 106).

NA has lived up to this promise, and the longer I stay clean the more I realize that knowing why is impossible and unnecessary. This program works, and has made good on its one promise, *period*. As long as I follow my predecessor’s lead, follow suggestions, find my Higher Power, embrace my powerlessness, read the literature, work the steps, be of service, go to meetings and share, I stay clean.

In this program I have discovered how nothing outside of me will ever ease my suffering or “fix” me. Instead, NA has taught me that the solution to my own suffering has always been within me, and I can learn to accept myself, defects and all. I no longer have to run from myself, or my emotional pain; instead, I get to sit with it, see the beauty in it and grow from it.

Initially, I only had hope in the rooms of NA because I truly thought death would be my only way out of the chaos. Now, I have faith in NA, my Higher Power and me, and believe I truly never have to use anything outside of me again. I will forever be grateful to Narcotics Anonymous for giving me the opportunity to lead a life full of wonder, tragedy, and all the in-between. Thank you, NA, for staying true to your one promise.

Stephanie B.

Clean-Time Chronicles

I’ve lived more than half my life in the rooms of NA, though not necessarily in recovery.

My first introduction to a 12-Step program was when I was 14. I was taken to a meeting with a group of other kids that were “at risk.” I suppose it was some type of H&I or PI meeting. Even then someone or something knew where my life would lead me. I had already been using almost daily for over 4 years. It would be another 11 years before I would hear about a 12-Step program. I knew I didn’t want to use, but I also knew I didn’t want to feel life most of the time.

It was that not wanting to feel life, to end it, that I made the choice to find a different way to cope with life. I started to work a 12-Step program, but it wasn’t to deal with my addiction, but to deal with life in someone’s else’s addiction. It would be another year before I admitted my own powerlessness of my addiction. This would completely change the way I saw life, dealt with life, lived life.

My first 10 years in the rooms of NA were filled with learning and growth. Those years would build the foundation – the bedrock for my life. I learned the basics of how to treat others in and out of the rooms. I learned about the love of this fellowship and how much others could care about me if I would let them and sometimes even if I wouldn’t let them, they would anyway. I learned about self-confidence. I would live through painful things in those years and found I could feel the agony, the hurt, the fear, and if I just moved forward to do the next right thing, it would be OK.

Most of the time the “okay” was not what I wanted or expected, but it was “okay.” I discovered that each time I went through a painful situation, I received a gift, a new understanding, a stronger belief in life and my Higher Power. These years were like a rebirth. I started a family, learned to raise kids, had a newborn, and became a father and a husband. I got deeply involved in NA service and at times was more involved in service than in recovery, but it was what it took to keep me in recovery. Not to run, and not to leave before I learned not to leave. I learned to follow through on commitments to others, to my family, wife, children, friends, co-workers and to myself.

I found enough self-worth and self-confidence to do what I really wanted to do in life. With the support of my family and friends, we started a new adventure and moved 1,200 miles from our comfortable rut of a life.

We began new careers, made friends, and re-engaged with the fellowship of NA. Essentially, we got involved in our community, and for the next 20 years life led to many wondrous adventures that I never even dreamt about prior to recovery. I have done, seen, and shared things with my wife, kids, family and friends that I couldn’t envision without recovery in my life.

And it’s been these 30 years that kept me alive these last two years since my family blew up in front of me. I thought I might lose my wife to a disease, after watching her brother, and father, who was the closest thing I ever had to a father, die. Followed by losing my sister, a nephew and a brother all in six months. The hardest loss followed with Don my best friend, who was living with us for the past five years. We miss him every day right now.

Life sucks sometimes. Recovery makes it bearable today. *I did not have to use today*. I get to feel the feelings. And I’m working on believing it will be “okay.”

Rich B.

