



# THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

August 2023

## Scars

I have scars, penetrating my skin, they run deep, some cut to the bone. There are scars that formed decades ago and other much more recently. The scars which formed over the past several years stil hurt. I cannot rid myself of their pain and I know it may linger for years.

These scars you cannot see, at least not on my skin. Sometimes you may see them upon my face for I will wear them when I remember those moments that left them. I may try to hide them, I may wear a mask to cover them up, but they are ever present.

Be glad you cannot see them when you look upon me. If I wore them on my skin you might shy away from me or shudder when I lay myself bare before you. My scars are memories, they have names and faces. The deepest of them I can recall the moment they formed.

My scars are blemishes upon my soul, tears on my face, regret, fear and self hatred. I can let them feast upon my soul, scrape away my very essence. I feel anger for letting them form. And there in lies the truth, I have caused many of my scars. I held the instrument that pierced, some cuts deep and ragged, I wonder if they will ever heal.

Two of my scars hurt more than any others and both were formed on the same day. They have names I gave to them. I held them and loved them until the day I chose to love my addiction more. It wasn't a blade that cut me. No, it was my ego, my drug of choice. The one I could control, the one I was "not addicted" to, or so I thought. Piece by piece it tore apart what made me good until a shell of a man was left and on April 20th of 2020 the two scars with names and faces were carved into me.

I will not get to see those two who these scars belong to for years and the pain can be overwhelming. It can tear me apart at any moment and bring me to my knees. Many of my scars are formed from love, some unconditional, which shows me if there was no love, these scars would not have formed at all and that is why as painful as they are, my scars are also beautiful.

These scars brought me to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous and their love tied me to my Higher Power when I joined this fellowship. They are a constant reminder of why I seek recovery. My scars are beautiful and even though at times I try and hide them they have made me who I am. They give me the words from which I write my articles and have allowed me to share myself with you so many times before.

I need to remember why I received them and that I gave them to myself. I need to share these scars with you just as one day I will share them with my daughters. In doing so, my scars will help heal the pain and in time where there were scars I may find joy, laughter and love, not only for those they represent, but also the one who caused them, myself.

*My name is Todd O. and I am an addict.*

### **8th Tradition** - *Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*

This tradition helps us to understand why NA should remain forever “nonprofessional.”

Many of us are professionals in our own right! Some of us come into recovery with professional status, but keeping our professionalism to ourselves gives any addict the ability to come to our meetings and not be judged or bombarded with outside issues during our meetings. Reaching out from addict-to-addict is an application of anonymity – We are present to one another as equals!

Our meetings are *not* classrooms or therapy groups; we share our experiences because we are experts on our own stories. We can bring skills and experience with us, but we

leave our status at the door. Our relationship with recovery and to service is we as addicts have found a way out, and that is what we share!

Nonprofessional isn't the same as unprofessional. Nonprofessional for us is the reminder that we carry the message to one another in the spirit of equality. Unprofessional means “below standard,” and this is not what our service efforts are about. We are reliable and responsible. We plan and try to execute our services efforts with the goal of carrying the message. We understand that part of carrying an attractive message is to ensure that our behavior is appropriate! **(Continued pg. 2)**

## Perception

“It’s a bird, it’s a plane, it’s Superman!”

This quote from the vintage superman radio, television, and movie series kind of gives us an idea of how our different perceptions can look and change. Our perceptions of ourselves, our perceptions of others, as well as the perception of things around us are always subject to change.

Let’s take a look at what the dictionary has to say about perception:

*The neurophysiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli.*

Now, let’s do a little exercise to illustrate our awareness and our interpretations. Look around the room and find an object to focus on, perhaps the object that you’re currently sitting on. One might immediately call that object a chair.

What else can it be seen as, how else can it be perceived, how else can it be interpreted?

Could it be seen as a collection of molecules and atoms? Perhaps it could be perceived as work of art. It could also be called a collection of wood, and or metal, fabric, and fasteners. One person that shared this exercise recently also described it as a potential weapon. I could definitely relate to that, as it brought back a memory of my sophomore year in high school, however, I digress, and that’s a story for another time.

The point of the exercise is noticing that we as humans many times have a knee-jerk reaction as we observe something around us, some thing about ourselves, and/or about someone else. It is also interesting to observe all the different decisions we make, based on that initial perception and definition. What could life be like if we were to take a moment and consider the numerous possibilities that exist in each and every moment.

Perceptions, have a way of stifling, and or excelling

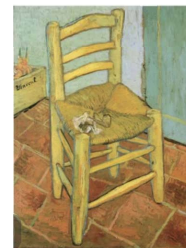
one’s personal growth. If I view the world from a place of pessimism, it is likely that I will walk around in fear more often and be much more guarded around others. If I spend my days viewing the world around me, and myself with a perception of optimism, I am likely to be more calm and serene. The optimistic perception, fosters gratitude, and loving interaction with those I come in contact with.

As I was writing this piece I became aware of a famous piece of art by Van Gogh. The painting is of a chair. I took the opportunity to sit with and view the image for a period of time. Having done this chair exercise many times in my life and using numerous objects, I was amazed at how still now I was able to calm my mind and experience all sorts of possibilities I had not previously considered. First I went to oh yeah just a painting of some old stray chair. Then I considered the multi-million dollar master piece that had been created. Van Gogh’s depiction of that chair over 100 years ago gave many since the opportunity to observe and interpret as they so chose. Ultimately the interpretation was defined as an enormously valuable piece of art.

Observations, perceptions, and interpretations can shape the quality of our life. The fabulous thing about that is that we each can choose for ourselves what that will look like. We can view adversity as a stepping stone to success. We can view accomplishment as a manifestation of our footwork and optimism. Ultimately we can make up whatever we want negative or positive. I can use my imagination to perceive fear and worry or I can use imagination to explore the joy of the universe.

You choose.  
Enjoy the journey  
and especially the here now!

*Tim B*



## 8th Tradition – Continued

Our beliefs about who or what we are, how we think others perceive us matter little. If we ask members to do more than their fair share or bring our professional status, we separate ourselves because we all need each other.

For the second part of this of this tradition, it clearly states our services centers may employ special workers. We have phones lines we must answer, and our internet presence may need development and maintenance beyond our local abilities. We sometimes contract those services we need to ensure that addicts seeking help can reach us. The most important part of this is that special workers *must* adhere to the 12 Traditions, even when we need to engage a lawyer to help us with our legal issues.

The job of carrying our message will always be nonprofessional, our trusted servants, special workers and those we hire for special tasks all perform duties that ultimately support our vision, serve our primary purpose, and help NA grow.

In-loving service,  
Samad A.  
H&I Prison Corr.

In the full-length book, *Guiding Principles*, there are many questions to discuss and write on. One of my favorite questions is asking how this Tradition bridges to other Traditions. What comes to light is how the Traditions and Concepts compliment and empower each other, but GSRs and members need to communicate to have an effective service structure.

Our service structure is based on letting the groups focus on the newcomer and still-suffering addict. Area Service Committees (ASCs) provide all local services to get addicts to meetings and community events. Our Arizona Region provides a website for any ASC to post their events and BMLT (basic meeting list in a toolbox). Moreover, the RSC is a resource network for areas and represents the Arizona Regional Service Committee (ARSC) at the WSC (World Service Conference). The Eighth Concept utilizes the pipeline from these service bodies to get the conscience of the Groups and their pulse at General Service Representative (GSR) Assemblies and through their Regional Committee Members (RCMs).

In our service meetings reports are essential information for the groups to make decisions and give direction to the subcommittees and executive members. Regular reports are ineffective if the GSRs and members don't listen or ask questions. Communication is a two-way street, and engaging discussion to make good decisions for the NA Fellowship is essential. We all need to participate for the groups to benefit from these discussions and no member should be denied his or her opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Whichever position a member holds they delegate and authorize decision making on behalf of that service body as long as there is strong communication between them and the committee.

Overall, we need to work with each other and to be more communicative. Unity of Service for the NA Fellowship and participating in a loving, nonjudgmental, nonthreatening way with each other is my goal along with growing spiritually within myself. Nowadays I get to serve in society because of the service I have done for Narcotics Anonymous.

*Steve S.*

**Step 8 – Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**

I wrote my first 8<sup>th</sup> Step in 1990. The previous year, I had completed a monstrous 300-page 4<sup>th</sup> Step followed by an all-day sharing of the 5<sup>th</sup> Step with my sponsor. Later that year and into 1990, I experienced for the first time that deep dark valley of hopeless the 6<sup>th</sup> Step has taken me all nine of my cycles of writing and sharing the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous over the 34 years I have been in the rooms—the last 28 years clean.

Since I knew my recovery--and hence my life—depended upon a thorough working of these steps the first time, I was too afraid to cut any corners or take any shortcuts. I navigated through an immense amount of pain trying to generate the *entirely ready* part of the Sixth Step. I did not yet understand that all that pain I experienced in the Sixth Step was actually the climbing out of that dark valley and up the mountain of the 7<sup>th</sup> Step. I remember I finally reached the summit of willingness and surrender in a church-basement meeting when it was my turn to share. I wanted to get into words how much torment I was suffering with my defects of character. However, when I opened my mouth, I could only get out the words “I hate this f\*\*king disease.”

I began sobbing uncontrollably. I couldn't stop and I felt embarrassed, self-conscious, and just wanted to run away. I cried for probably 30 seconds while the room was completely silent (this was a smoking meeting and I think even the non-smokers lit up then). Finally, Jamie R. stood up, walked over to me, knelt, and hugged me. Several others got out of their chairs and came around to hold on to me. Not a word was spoken while I cried for two or three minutes. I stopped crying, they went back to their seats and the meeting continued. That was the moment that I fully became a member of Narcotics Anonymous—a *part of the We*. In that moment I became entirely ready and was able to write and pray my 7<sup>th</sup> Step prayer with my sponsor within a few weeks of that meeting.

Having completed the heavy lifting and deep introspection of those four steps (4-7), I had come to a reckoning with myself – I did not like who I used to be and I did not like who I was. Those Steps did for me exactly what they are engineered to do. They helped my find my motivation, willingness, and surrender for change.

**(Continued pg. 4)**

I was ready to put this willingness into action in my life. I was ready to repair the damage I had done in my past, beginning with Step 8.

In my first Eighth Step, I discovered 86 people, organizations, and institutions that I had harmed and owed amends to. As our Basic Texts discusses, it is best not to predict or have expectations about how 9<sup>th</sup> Step is going to go. I didn't tell my sponsor, but I organized my list by what I thought would be the easiest to the most difficult. Spoiler alert: It did not work out that way in the 9<sup>th</sup> Step.

More often than not, the amends that I thought would be simplest and easiest ended up becoming complicated and painful. The ones about which I had the most fear tended to go much better than I expected.

Now the hard part of Step 8...becoming "willing". After all that pain of Steps 4 – 9, you'd think I would be champing at the bit to get this work done and make amends so that I could lessen some of my shame and gain a little self-respect, right? Yeah, not so much.

The ones that I judged "easy," I had immediate willingness and jumped on into Step 9 with little preparedness and, in classic addict fashion, made my messes messier. There were a few names I had to re-add to my 8<sup>th</sup> Step list because of the harm I did attempting to make amends to them too early and unprepared. The ones that scared me (like the really bad relationship and financial amends), I just could not get to willingness—I could only get to fear.

I would declare my lack of willingness to my sponsor and then just go on to the 9<sup>th</sup> Step. (In my defense, each time through I was whittling off a few more names by becoming willing and making a few amends). I went through six cycles of working through the Steps before I became willing to make financial amends and some of the uglier relationship amends. I kept a box of receipts and delinquent notices on bills through three different sponsors (I moved multiple times) and it took me 14 years clean until I finally found willingness in 2009 to address these final amends. Each of those sponsors would ask me when we got to the 8<sup>th</sup> Step, "What about the box?" I hemmed and hawed, demurred, said I was "working on getting willingness." I engaged in all sorts of self-deception in avoiding making those amends.

The truth was I was too afraid. I thought for 14 years that I needed to find the willingness my own self. That I had to "man up" and force myself into the willingness to make the amends that I needed to make to get right with myself. Guess how well that way worked for me when I was trying

to get clean? How many times have we heard in meetings, "If you want to find willingness, surrender and ask HP for help?" Well, of course that didn't apply to me because I was busy trying to be my own Higher Power. While with your help and the help of NA, I have become a pretty good man, I am never going to be a very good God.

I reached the place where the pain of staying the same was greater than the fear of change. I found my way to my knees, went tits up, and asked my *real* Higher Power for help along with the admission that I was unable to do it alone. I reached out for help. I consulted an attorney and accountant to begin repaying the IRS. I worked with a counselor and my sponsor to prepare for the scary relational amends. In 2017, I finished paying all my debts (including \$250K to the IRS) and am now debt free. My credit rating is near perfect. I am no longer ashamed or afraid of myself. I have a little bit about what we talk about in the Pink Pamphlet (IP #19). The lie is dead...we do recover.

There is one last piece of experience, strength, and hope that I want to share on the 8<sup>th</sup> Step. Three years ago, I was working my eighth cycle through the Steps and discovered that I could not produce any names for my 8<sup>th</sup> Step. I called my sponsor and shared with him all the situations that I thought I might owe amends but discovered that I already addressed them with a 10<sup>th</sup> Step near the times that the "wrong" occurred. It felt surreal. I still wrote the Step but there were no people nor Institutions to whom I owed amends. However, in the most recent trip through the Steps (I am on Step Eleven presently), I did discover two people that I had harmed from my past that I did not remember in the previous cycle. Funny how all this recovery stuff works for us, isn't it.

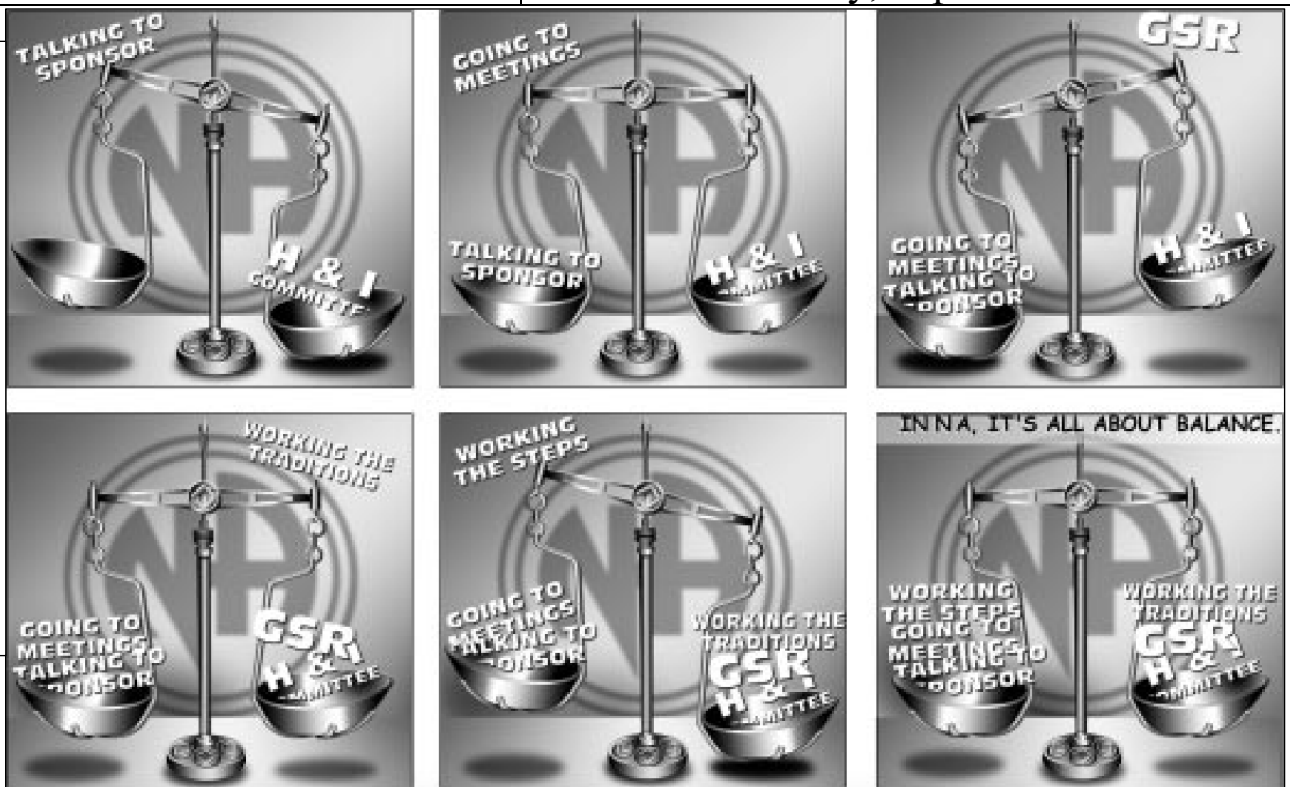
*Anonymous*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Check out *Arizona-NA.ORG* for more Details**

Pool Party	6:00pm Sunday, August 6th
Outdoor Movie Night	7:00pm Friday, August 11th
NACONA III BBQ Fundraiser	11:00am Sunday, August 13th
Lip Sync Battle	5:00pm Saturday, August, 19th
Salt River Run	8:00am Sunday, August 20th
West Valley Campout	Thursday August 24 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday August 27 <sup>th</sup>
The last Splash Campout	Friday August 25 <sup>th</sup> - Sunday August 27 <sup>th</sup>
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	10:30am Saturday, August 26th
East Valley Kickball	6:30pm Saturday, August 26th
SEAZNAC	Friday, September 1 <sup>st</sup> – Sunday, September 3 <sup>rd</sup>

**The NA Way – June 2004  
(Volume 21 Number 3)**





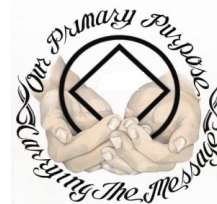
# Sponsorship Behind the Walls

Sponsorship in Arizona for inmates is 100% voluntary and can begin with just a letter of willingness to participate. Once your message of interest has been received, your initial projects to be completed will be sent to you. After completion, a sponsor is then assigned to work with you as long as the communication remains open. Your Sponsor will send you an initial welcome letter letting you know who they are and how to further reach them with "Step Work" and other correspondence. This method of sponsorship is useful for those who are serving six months or longer than six months from their release date.

### Where to mail your letter:

Arizona Region of Narcotics Anonymous – H&I  
PO Box 1351  
Phoenix, AZ 85001

While you wait to hear from us, search out your unit for existing NA meetings and begin attending. In the meantime, let us welcome you to Narcotics Anonymous, **Arizona Sponsorship behind the walls.**



### A. Write to us about:

1. What did using cause you to lose or give up/away?
2. Where did you first hear about Narcotics Anonymous?
3. What have you gained from working a program of recovery?
4. If you are working with a sponsor:
  - a. Is he an inmate?
  - b. Someone from before?
  - c. Or from writing to "Sponsorship behind the walls"?
5. What keeps your interest in NA alive?
6. How long will you remain incarcerated before release and your concerns for that eventful day.

### B. Guidelines for writing:

1. Keep your story concise and fit it on one page or less.
2. No need to over emphasize with cussing.
3. Please don't write with excessive details about the drugs or drug class which you used.

### C. Once completed send your story to:

East Valley Prison Coordinator  
PO Box 5264  
Mesa, AZ, 85221



## Inmates! Show your creativity

We would like to publish your artwork. **The NA Times** - Phoenix, West Valley, East Valley – is looking to involve the members of the fellowship **Behind the Walls**. Send your artwork and a piece of your recovery story to us for publication (Keep the artwork clean and recovery related).

### Send to:

Narcotics Anonymous Prison Coordinator  
PO Box 5264  
Mesa, AZ 85221

EAST VALLEY ACTIVITIES PRESENTS



**NA HIKE** 4th SATURDAY  
July 22nd, 2023  
**RAILROAD TUNNEL**

From the 260 / 87 intersection in Payson go north on 87 a couple miles to the Houston Mesa turnoff on the right. Follow Houston Mesa 10.3 miles to Whispering Pines and turn left onto Control Road [FR64]. In 0.7 miles turn right onto FR32 and bear right at 3.3 miles to FR32A and travel 0.5 miles to the trailhead parking lot.

Drive slow on FR32 to minimize dust for the residents.  
We will hike Col. Devin Trail #290 to the RR tunnel

**Parking is \$0.- the hike is priceless.**

Meet us There at the Trailhead @ 10:45 AM  
Hike Starts at 11:00  
It is suggested to leave Mesa by 8:30

Call to let us know you are coming:  
**Chuck H 480-236-4859**

**BRING:**  
Newcomer, Water, Snack, & PMA



We Will Find A Cozy Spot To Have an NA Meeting

[www.arizona-na.org](http://www.arizona-na.org)



ACCEPTANCE  
ADDICTION  
ANONYMOUS  
DRUGS  
FAITH  
GROWTH  
HIGHERPOWER  
HONESTY  
MANIPULATED  
MEDITATION  
OPEN-MINDED  
POWERLESS  
REFLECTION  
SELF-ESTEEM  
SELF-PITY  
SERENITYPRAYER  
SPONSORSHIP  
SURRENDER  
TWELVESTEPS  
WILLINGNESS

K A S S E L R E W O P I B V F  
L R E F L E C T I O N C D L U  
T W E L V E S T E P S E S M R  
K I J Y T S E N O H D A A E C  
A L H D A S G D J N N N D D P  
E L I V H R R U I O I H D I I  
C I G O A U P M N P H T I T H  
N N H E G Q - Y U P Q W C A S  
A G E S K N M L T K Y O T T R  
T N R T E O A J V I H R I I O  
P E P P U T Y S R X N G O O S  
E S O S E J F A I T H E N N N  
C S W D S U R R E N D E R O O  
C H E O S E L F - P I T Y E P  
A B R G M E E T S E - F L E S