



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

December 2023

Tradition 12: *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principle before personalities.*

What is “anonymity”? A dictionary defines anonymity as “the condition of being anonymous,” or “lack of outstanding, individual, or unusual features, impersonality.” In *It Works: How and Why*, the book states, “Our unity is so precious that, given a choice between fulfilling our own wishes and preserving our fellowship’s common welfare, we put the interests of NA first.”

A few years ago, we saw this principle in action with the Day of the Dinosaurs. Personalities and some bad decisions pushed the committee in a direction that could have caused problems for NA as a whole. What occurred is that several members quietly stepped up, formed a new committee, and took action that put the event back on a spiritual and sound financial basis.

No one mentioned personalities; we simply saw members who saw a problem and fixed it with a new committee and that committee’s group conscience. This is an example of the 12th Tradition in action.

When newcomers arrive at their first meeting, they may not think NA will work for them. However, they see the unity in our meetings as members work together to put on a meeting or an event. Our unity comes springs from our anonymity. We are all just recovering addicts who, although we may come from dissimilar backgrounds, help each other stay clean.

As our book says, when difficulties arise with personalities, we always make decisions not based on conflict but based on what is best for our fellowship as a whole.

That is the 12th Tradition in action.

Nancy G.

A Red Winter’s Night By Todd. O

Red Winter's Night,
 I sit here in prison
 Blood runs through these veins,
 my heart beats the color crimson
 Drugs which have run through this body
 have taken their toll
 Addiction in my life tore me apart, .
 tried to destroy my soul
 Recalling endless nights,
 lying awake without sleep
 I will always remember my daughters' love,
 in my heart I will keep

I tried so many times to break
 the chains of addiction
 The more I tried, the more I failed,
 the more it caused affliction
 Having not yet found the fellowship
 of Narcotics Anonymous,
 My disease turned love and hate
 to words that were synonymous
 About to lose all I loved,
 I should not have been surprised
 I remember when they took me away,
 my world crumbled and fell, it capsized

I walked into these rooms
 a broken man in submission
 Through the fellowship I found love,
 but still suffered the human condition
 I started working the steps,
 learning to put hate and fear aside
 In my heart, my soul, I found hope,
 I felt the changing tide
 In time I turned it over, giving my will,
 my life, to a Higher Power
 She has shown me love, given me strength,
 She's my angel, my beacon, my tower

On a Red Winter's Night,
 I sit here in prison
 Love runs through these veins and shoots from me
 like light through a prism
 I sit here on this bed writing a poem
 for you to read
 In the hope that it will catch the eye
 of someone who is in need
 Just for today I can see what I have achieved,
 how much I have grown
 One day I hope to share this love
 with my daughters, Elaina and Sloan

The Power of Example (Step 12)

Step 12 has taught me to live by the spiritual principles and pass this message to other addicts. I assumed this spiritual awakening Step 12 speaks of was for my internal self as the Basic Text tells me that there are a number of benefits to working the Steps and a number of ways to carry the message. I never thought of it as affecting my external self. I feel the internal changes in me every day. No longer is my addiction controlling me as I feel more in control of it with the help of my Higher Power. However, the external change from doing the Steps came as a complete shock several months ago.

Back in my addiction just prior to coming to Narcotics Anonymous, I found myself face-planted on my front gravel lawn struggling to just stand up. No matter how hard I tried, I could not simply stand erect under the influence of my addiction. Ten minutes later a man walking his dog shouted to me from across the street, "Hey, lady, do you need help?"

As loud as I could, I desperately yelled back, "Yes!"

He crossed the street and hoisted me up to a standing position. I was so afraid of falling down again, I didn't say one word to him - not even a thank you. Instead, I ran into the house and collapsed into my favorite rocking chair vowing not to leave that chair until I was able to move without falling which was 2-3 hours later.

That was my final, rock-bottom event that led me to NA. Four months later clean, I was walking to my curbside mailbox when a stranger with his dog asked me, "How's your mother?"

I was confused. Who is this guy and why is he asking about my mother who passed away 36 years ago? **2**

"You know, your mother. I picked her up off the gravel when she fell a few months ago. How is she?"

Embarrassingly, I corrected him, "I was the one who fell, and you picked **me** up."

"Oh, no - that was your mother. A much older woman- **not you.**"

I didn't want to argue or go into great detail about me but repeated quietly that it really was me and thanked him.

Shaking his head back and forth in disbelief, he briskly walked away with his dog muttering to himself that it was my mother. He couldn't and wouldn't believe me.

I was quite shell-shocked the rest of the day. Did I really look that terrible when I was deep into my addiction? I noticed the big changes internally but not the external changes.

Because of these internal and external changes along with the spiritual awakening, friends and family now ask me how I did it. I tell them I didn't do anything, but it was my HP and the program of Narcotics Anonymous that gave me the experience, strength and hope to get me here today just for today. As in the *Basic Text*, page 51, states, "Sometimes, the only message necessary to make the suffering addict reach out is the *power of example*"..."We are examples of the program working."

12th Concept: *In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.*

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Twelfth Concept In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government. Selfless service is an essentially spiritual endeavor. Our Twelfth Step says, in part, that "having had a spiritual awakening," we individually "tried to carry this message to addicts." Our collective service efforts arise from that same spiritual foundation. Having experienced the results of this program in our own lives, we join together to carry the recovery message farther than we could individually. NA service is not about forcing our will or our ideas on others; rather, it is about humbly serving them, without expectation of reward.

This principle underlies all we do in our groups, service boards, and committees. The Twelfth Concept reminds us that we ourselves have experienced recovery only because others put this selfless principle into action before us, taking the time and the care to carry the NA message to us when we were still suffering from active addiction. In service, we express our gratitude for the recovery others have shared with us by carrying ours to others. Nothing could be further from the drive to rule or direct than this spirit of selfless service.

Our groups were created because we found that, alone, we could not "stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live." In the same way, our groups have joined together to create a service structure, a cooperative effort designed to help them carry the message further than they could carry it separately. The service structure has not been created as a way for some groups to force others to do their bidding. Rather, it has been developed to combine the strength of our groups to better fulfill necessary services which usually cannot be fulfilled well, if at all, by individual groups: developing and distributing
(Continued pg. 3)

materials that share our message in print, providing information about NA to the general public, transmitting our message to addicts who cannot attend meetings, and supporting new groups and new NA communities. NA service is the cooperative effort of trusted servants receiving guidance from the groups, not a rule enforced by a governing body.

The process of joining together to create the service structure is an expression of our groups' humility. Separately, they can do far, far less to fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose than they can do together. In the same way, the various elements of our service structure each play their own particular role in the broader Narcotics Anonymous service plan. All the elements depend on all the others for their effectiveness; when any one element attempts to act as an agency of government, rather than a vehicle for service, it strains the ties that bind us all together, threatening our fellowship's overall effectiveness in fulfilling its primary purpose. Humility is an essential attribute of nongoverning service in Narcotics Anonymous.

In order to serve well, each element of our service structure must make an earnest effort at effective communication. As groups, as trusted servants, as service boards and committees, we must share fully with others, and listen carefully and respectfully to their words to us. Others may use language to divide the strength of their opponents, so that they may rule them; in NA service, we share with one another so that we may combine our strength, the better to fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose. To maintain our accountability to those we serve, we are bound to inform them in a complete, accurate, and concise fashion of our activities. The nongoverning nature of our service structure dictates that we seek others' advice in our own decisions, their consent in decisions affecting them, and their cooperation in decisions affecting us all. Open, honest, and straightforward communication nurtures the spirit of service in our fellowship, and poisons the impulse to govern.

The kind of authority that our groups have delegated to our boards and committees is the authority to serve, not to govern. Each element of our service structure, from the group to the world, has its own role to play; all, however, serve together as a team, striving toward a common goal, "that no addict seeking recovery need die without having the chance to find a new way of life." It is our sometimes hard-won experience that quality service, just like quality recovery, can only be accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect, mutual support, and mutual trust. Together, we recover, and together, we serve—this is the spiritual core of our program, the foundation of our fellowship. A structure based on that foundation could only be one of service, never of government.

- Reprinted from "Twelve Concepts for NA Service"

Substance Abuse

I can't see - I'm in the dark.
My love in "drive", now is in "park".
I'm all alone. Nothing's clear.
Can't hear my voice. Am I even here?

There was dim light, now I can't see.
Dark again... it's only me.
I picture myself underneath shut eyes
knowing it's just a disguise.

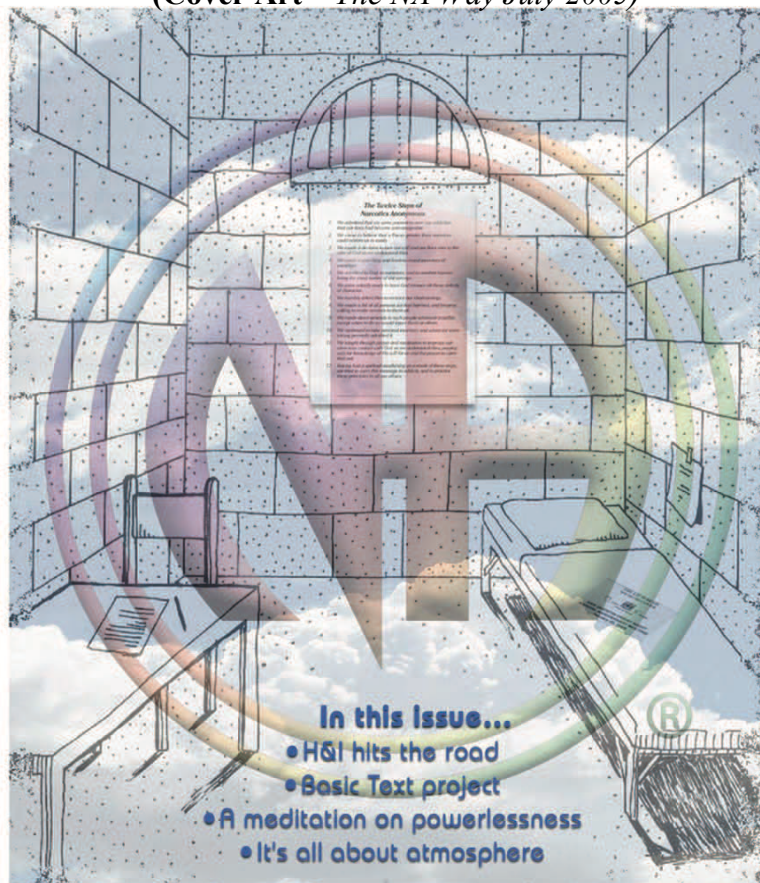
I'm screaming out without a voice.
I know this can't be the right choice.
I'm out of breath. I can't inhale.
This air is toxic. Am I in hell?

I want to freeze and just stay put,
but it's scary here, so I start to look...
I start to listen... I call for You.
I'll fight until some light shines through.

I might be tired... feel too weak,
but whatever it takes to finally see.
I won't give up till I'm set free.
Till I can feel God's breath in me.

Heather A.

(Cover Art – *The NA Way* July 2005)

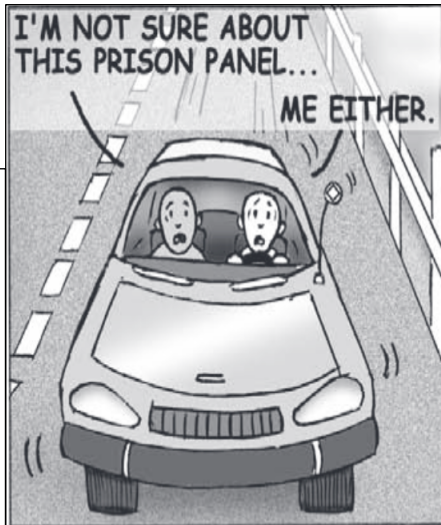


UPCOMING EVENTS

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

PASC NYE 70's Party	Sunday, December 31th
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	11:00am Saturday, December 23rd

The NA Way – July 2005
(Volume 22 Number 3)



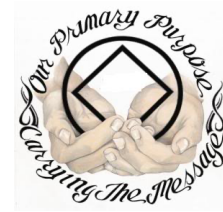
Sponsorship Behind the Walls

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



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