



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

February, 2024

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

My first thought upon seeing this was, “Here is where they’re going to try to sneak God into my life and I’m not having any part of it.” Thankfully, I had received a thorough whipping from the disease of addiction and had some willingness to try something new, even though I was skeptical whether this was it or not.

“Coming to believe” implies that it’s not going to happen overnight, and that’s how it worked for me. As I continued to see evidence of the program working in other people’s lives, I began to think that it could work for me as well.

“A power greater than ourselves”; “Aha, here comes the God thing,” I thought. When the whole “power greater than ourselves” was explained more thoroughly, my apprehension lifted somewhat. It was apparent to me that a power greater than me could easily be a bunch of recovering addicts. There was a positive energy in a group of men who had been where I’d been and were trying something different that I found appealing. If this could work for them, maybe it could work for me.

“Could restore us to sanity.” This idea took a little longer to get clear in my head. It had been a long time since I’ve been sane, I thought, and being restored to who or what I was when I was 12 years old, didn’t look all that appealing. Luckily for me, there were people in the program who didn’t laugh me out of the door.

When it was explained that it could mean learning to live a life without the insanity of addiction and all the shit that accompanies it, I was willing to give that a try. The insanity of addiction for me meant that going to jail on a regular basis was ok; it was the cost of doing business. When I realized how much good there was that I had not experienced, being restored to that sanity looked pretty attractive.

Fast forward 20 years and it’s amazing to me how much my life has changed for the better. I’ve been to jail a lot in the last 20 years, but only as a spectator, carrying what I hope is a message of hope and the promise of freedom from active addiction. I’m willing to do whatever it takes to keep the life I have received here alive.

Tom T.

From Behind the walls: Self-Acceptance

This month through an Arizona Hospitals & Institutions (H&I) committee taking meetings into prisons, we received this letter from an inmate. Here are his thoughts on self-acceptance. Over the next few months, we’ll be printing some articles for inmates who lives change as a result of our H&I volunteers taking the message of NA into various prison and jail facilities.

Self-Acceptance

I truly have struggled for many years with finding self-acceptance within myself. Now at the age of 33, I am able to finally look in the mirror and accept the person who I as trying to be, who I was, and who I finally am now. This is a grateful recovering addict ... who carries the NA message to the still sick and suffering ... addicts inside and

outside these rooms. All [of] this [is] thanks to my Higher Power.

It truly works if you work it.

-Eric

NACONA III FUNDRAISING PRESENTS.

HOME GROUP CHALLENGE: TRIVIA & MUNCHIES

WITH GUEST SPEAKERS & JUDGES!

FEB 24
2PM-7PM

8340 E Leigh Dr.
Prescott Valley,
AZ 86314

GRAB YOUR HOMIES & TEAM UP TO COMPETE AGAINST HOME GROUPS STATE WIDE!!!

\$15/person to play

REGISTER AT THE EVENT TO PLAY IN 1 OF 3 TRIVIA ROUNDS

You don't have to play... Support NACONA III @ THE DOOR TO JOIN IN on THE FOOD & FUN

SWAG BAG (W/ REGISTRATION) (LIMITED SUPPLIES)

PRIZES FOR TOP 3 WINNING HOME GROUPS

JUDGES TO VOTE ON BEST GAME APPETIZERS (I.E. WINGS, POTATO SKINS, CHIPS/DIPS, SLIDERS, ETC)

SURPRISE YOUR BEST PRIZES

<https://www.nacona.org/> -or- text Adriana (928)800-4748

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

Step 2 Hypocrisy

What a hypocrite I am. I declare myself to be an agnostic/atheist – not sure if there is a God and not believing in one. But at the same time, I talk to the God of my understanding every day, sometimes several times a day. It’s a spiritual, not religious God. Why?

The first power I found greater than myself was my disease of addiction to drugs and alcohol. But I had to find a power other than my human power to replace this power of addiction. My human intelligence was not enough to keep me clean. My own will power was not enough as I surrendered to the addiction day after day despite swearing I was not going to each morning.

I had to come to the realization and evidence that I did not give this spiritual life a fair hearing. That *coming* to believe in a “Power greater than ourselves” is actually a strength and not a weakness. It will and has given me purpose and direction in my life of abstinence. Besides, the *Basic Text* states on page 24, “We can use the Power long before we understand it.”

I came to believe just the *willingness* to believe in a spiritual Higher Power is the key for me. Not faith, not belief, not spiritual awakening, not understanding, not courage, not acceptance – just a *willingness*. It has become

a program of action for me. I speak with the God of my understanding daily. I have come to believe in and rely on a Power outside myself which I still do not understand or comprehend, but the evidence that I stay clean every day is overwhelmingly enough for me that this works. I can feel it.

Still calling myself an atheist, I feel hypocritical calling my Higher Power “God.” But it is easy to spell and say, and comprehensible to others whose spiritual practice and vocabulary may be different than mine. It is the common label also used in the Steps.

I did not arrive at this conclusion because I believed in, had faith in, understood anything, or had courage. No, I started in Narcotics Anonymous confused, scared and defiant. I have made progress with acceptance, surrender, and *willingness* because it works. Anyone – ambivalent or kicking, screaming, and arguing like me – can take the same action of just *coming* to believe and to rely on a Power outside themselves. I still do not understand or comprehend this will restore me to sanity, but it did. *It just works!*

Kathy M.

The 2nd Tradition: “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 first time I read the traditions was at a meeting hall where they had them mounted on the wall next to the twelve steps. When I read them for the first time the only thing that stood out was the word God. I thought I had been introduced to some religious cult and now I had to bow down to their God. I am glad to say I was completely wrong. I learned that Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual program and that God was one of my understandings and one that worked for me. The best thing I learned was that the God was NOT me.

In looking at the terminology of the second tradition many people now might find the wording offensive as it looks gender specific. You have to realize the traditions were written over 50 years ago. So today you could change the wording to read a loving God as they may express themselves in our group conscience.

So what does all this mean anyway? To me this means that nobody runs the show. It means that we need to look at our principles that effect our decision making in our groups. Our own personalities need to take a back seat and we need to come from a place of open- mindedness. This is not an easy task. It helps if the person in the service commitment has worked all 12 steps before becoming a GSR so they have a clear understanding of how to come from a place of

principles and not self-run ego. Personalities always seem to come out when we meet in service meetings. Which is why I believe the traditions were formulated as a reminder and a way to keep ourselves focused on the common good of all members. We are there to carry the message of the whole, not the individual.

Group conscience should not be a rushed thing made by one person. It should be discussed with all members and brought to a vote so everyone has a say in the matter. This helps to make everyone’s voice heard. It helps with the unity. Rushed decisions almost always come from a place of ego. I feel it’s more important to come from a space where our higher power can work through us to help in solving a problem.

I personally participate in a group conscience at my home group level. I have always had a home group since I joined NA over 32 years ago. Group conscience is all of us actively listening to each other and working together to come to a solution. In being an active member of my home group I have been able to take what I’ve learned here and bring it to my professional working environment. If you don’t have a home group, I suggest you get one and become part of the solution.

Carol Mc

As I came, came to, and came to believe in Narcotics Anonymous and the possibility of a Higher Power, the first place I felt this was in an NA meeting that I attended regularly. It was suggested to me that I join a Homegroup. I had already volunteered to make coffee and set up the chairs and put everything away after the meeting. I came early and I stayed after the meeting. I got to know the members of that group. I felt a part of Narcotics Anonymous and it felt like family to me, like home.

I wanted what I saw in the members in my own life and was willing to work for it. I wanted to smile and laugh again. So I joined the group officially and started attending Homegroup meetings. Over time, I served various roles in the group and learned more about how Narcotics Anonymous works.

The newcomer was the most important person and the group was the driving force of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. I was the newcomer, and then I was reaching out to newcomers at my Homegroup! Anything that NA eventually adopted was brought before my Homegroup! I was a part of NA as a whole, the whole world of NA.

For the first time I was part of something that seemed so equitable, no authorities, being a part of the decision making process for something that my life depended upon. It was like our symbol, a pyramid with the bottom deciding what would go to the top. The base, like the symbol of my recovery, was the basis of the freedom I would experience. I needed my Homegroup!

Being a part of a Homegroup has enriched my recovery. I have had different Homegroups in various states, but I have still been a part of NA as a whole since my early recovery. My disease wants to isolate me from others and for me to be immersed in self, but being a part of a Homegroup has allowed me to recover on a different level. I started taking responsibility and participating in my recovery, developing a consistent structure in my life that moved away from the chaos I was experiencing when I first got to Narcotics Anonymous.

Someone from my first Homegroup told me that it is safer and better for my recovery to be on the inside of the group rather than on the fringes. By being of service to my Homegroup, taking on service positions within my Homegroup, attending Homegroup meetings, voting on issues or literature for NA (whether it be for the area, region, or NA as a whole) I am taking responsibility for my recovery. My Homegroup is the authority of Narcotics Anonymous and not some CEO or appointed member of Narcotics Anonymous making decisions for NA as a whole.

Therefore, my Homegroup is the voice of NA and as a member, my responsibility!

Colleen C

The 2nd Step: *“We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”*

The admission of my powerlessness coupled with surrender to the disease of addiction had left me completely aware of just how unmanageable my life had become. There was a need deep within me to change my way of life and listening to other members in the rooms had given me hope that it was possible. With the power of addiction and my disease greater than me, I understood that I would need another power greater than me to recover.

The question “where do I begin?” was repeating itself over and over in my head. I was too afraid to begin writing out the step without a concrete, physical description of what my higher power was. I knew what I didn’t believe (that part was easy!), but what did that mean about what I do believe to be a power greater than me? I spoke with my sponsor about my concerns and the desire to perfect my idea

before even beginning. She suggested I call other women in recovery to ask them what their experience was with the second step.

The women I spoke with openly shared their experience with coming to find their higher power and how their ideas of a power greater than them had changed, shifted, grew over time. And the beautiful part, they were all different! We are all free to choose what works for us.

As our literature says, “We came to believe implies a process”. By reading that sentence, I surrendered, allowing myself the grace to begin where I am, having faith and trusting that my relationship and understanding with grow, change, deepen, strengthen with time and effort. Just like those who came before me.

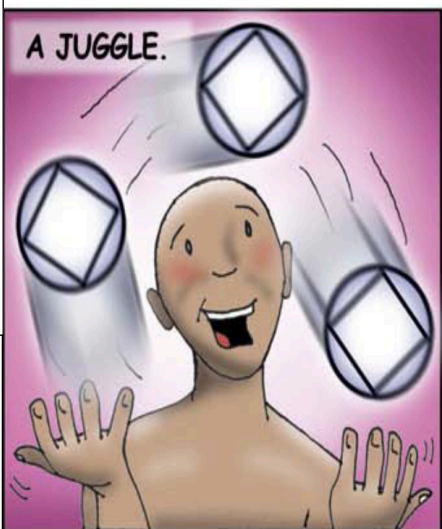
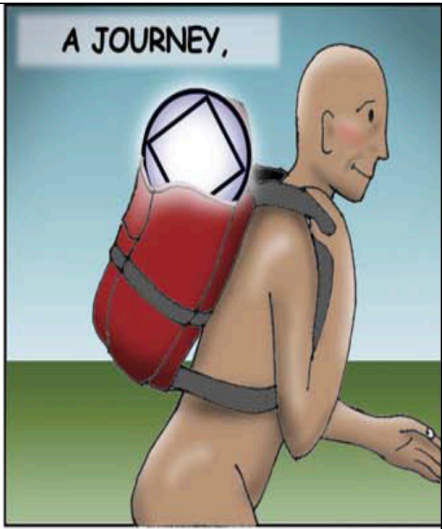
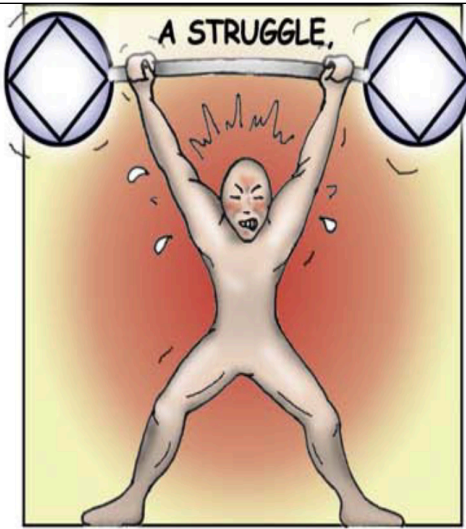
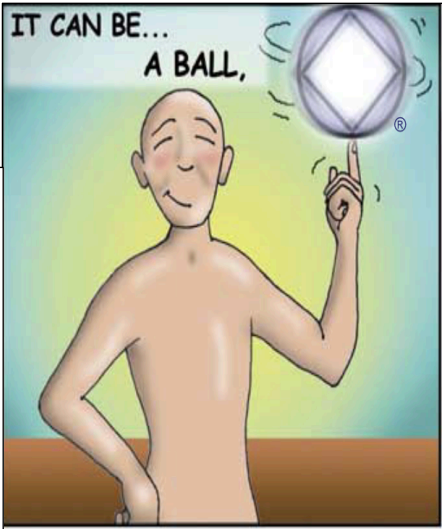
Leanna W.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Game Group – Ray of Hope	Saturday, February 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th , 24 th 2-4pm
This is the Way 3 rd Anniversary Celebration	Wednesday February 7 th 6:00pm
Fiesta Fundraiser (Mt Lemmon Bash Fundraiser)	Saturday, February 10 th 11:00am
Luv Dance (SEAZNA activities)	Friday, February 16 th 6:00pm
Labor of Love Anniversary Potluck/Speaker Jam	Saturday, February 17 th 11:30am
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday, February 24 th 9:15am

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(Volume 23 Number 2)



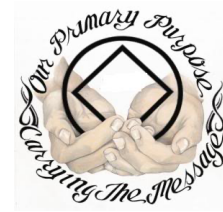
Sponsorship Behind the Walls

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:

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SO BRING YOUR BEST
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