The Mask Removed

Sometimes I find in our most desperate hours we truly cannot see ourselves for who we thought we were. We try to pull ourselves up from the ashes, and we do, we find something so amazing and eye opening that we feel an almost enlightenment.

I knew who I was burnt down my past and caused those great despair, and deep down I knew it would effect my future. I gave you a promise to always be honest, a promise I intend to keep to everyone in my life, but honesty can be hard to hear just as hard as it can be to tell.

I know the true extent of addiction when it comes to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. For years I wore a mask clouded as the doctor and I let a certain drug into my life who brought out Mr. Hyde. And when he takes over, he got to decide what I did. Even Jekyll too clouded by his drug of choice cannot see Hyde's drug slowly take over and bring other addictions so vile and unwanted to me now.

I never got a chance to reveal my true self until I became clean of all drugs. As one drug may have had me wear a mask, the other made me transform into someone completely different. All this came crashing down in a moment where I had a choice to make. Whether to be honest or continue the lies. I chose honesty and honesty landed me in jail.

After a while being clean I understood it was for a reason I chose honesty. The universe she wanted to show me who I was and who I could truly be. And I feel that Phoenix inside. Sometimes I feel it way too much. Other times the ashes are so damning they suffocate me because I need to face the decisions Mr. Hyde made.

It's a lot like life to give you something so amazing and real just to let you know she's always in control. You chose honesty, you made a commitment, you killed Mr. Hyde and tore the mask off Dr. Jekyll and destroyed it. I chose to give my life a greater purpose. I will be honest and I will remain clean.

Today, use would have come as a blessing as it did in my past. But it would have shattered the honesty I promised you, my Higher Power and myself. Today I will not use. It's crazy because if I hadn't let Hyde take over I may have never been in the presence of my home group and met the people I have whom forever changed my life. To try and wrap my head around it would be so complex it would put anyone in a mental hospital.

You didn't find me in my addiction, you came into my life when I'm rising from my ashes. I cannot say anything else but this, I am not the person of my past. I love being clean, I love the fact the clouds have been lifted and my intellect is coming through. I love to walk the shoes God intended me to walk in and I'm doing everything in my power to put the past behind me and focus on my future.

Todd O.

Good morning family1 JFT and our relationship with our HP is the backbone to lasting Recovery. For me, either my HP is everything or my HP is nothing. Upon completing my Third Step I realized that in order for me to change, I had to turn my will and my life completely over to a Power greater than myself. The key word in that sentence was completely, not half way and then take it back. I did those half measures in the beginning until I looked at when I took the reigns from my HP, and discovered each time I messed it up. Today as a result
of working the Steps and completing that relationship in the Eleventh Step, I now have a life worth living. Nowhere in any of my Steps did it say my life would become perfect, but it did release me from my obsession to use and the tools to handle life on life’s terms. As long as I continue to allow my HP to be in charge, I will continue on my road to recovery. For that, I’m truly grateful. 😎

Jimi H

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Want to be of service?</th>
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<td>Are you interested in sponsoring and working the 12 steps of NA with an incarcerated inmate? if so Sponsorship behind the walls could use your help. There is a two-year clean time requirement, must have worked the steps of NA with an NA sponsor, and be willing to carry a clear NA message. If you are interested, please email <a href="mailto:HI@arizona-na.org">HI@arizona-na.org</a>. Regional H&amp;I meets the third Sunday of every odd month at 10am before region. Inmates need to receive the lifesaving message of Narcotics Anonymous, too! You can help, whether you’ve ever done time or not.</td>
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<th>The Twelve Steps of NA</th>
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<td><strong>Step 11</strong>: 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.</td>
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More will be revealed is how I feel about step 11. Over time, prayer was something I did while driving to work. Meditating was difficult because quieting this mind is a challenge. These past few months in 2020, the way I practice step 11 is completely different for the better.

Now I begin praying before I get out of bed. I also pray before I go to bed. Anytime during the day, I spend about 20 minutes in deep prayer and meditation. My dedication to this routine daily has changed me profoundly.

Some of the ways I have changed are that I am very aware that God is always present with me. The more time I’m in prayer and listening to my God speak to me, my trust, hope, and faith grow.

I know I am living the program more now through practicing spiritual principles such as love, forgiveness, honesty, and humility. This addict is grateful for this step because it deepened my love and understanding of my God. Hopefully, others can see the positive change in me. I see the change in my body, mind, and spirit.

Thanks, NA, for bringing me closer to my God through working the steps.

Sandra M.

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<td><strong>Tradition 11</strong>: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films</td>
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**Tradition Eleven**

I belong to a small group of women who meet once a month to discuss the traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. This has been a great learning experience for me. Not only did the traditions become more important, but so did the spiritual principles, values, and morals of our fellowship. As I wrote, read, and talked about the traditions, my love and gratitude has grown exponentially for Narcotics Anonymous. It seems I have morphed, once again, into the, “we,” that our literature talks about. One of the important lessons I have learned being in this group, was that honesty coupled with the new depth of knowledge of each tradition has made me a better member of this fellowship.

The twelve traditions of Narcotics Anonymous are the principles that keep us focused on our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict that still suffers. The basic text puts it like this;

“N.A. has one message, “An addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.”

How we do this, is what the eleventh tradition is all about. Since this tradition talks about our public relations policy being based on attraction rather than promotion, N.A. is here for the person who isn’t here - yet. This tradition teaches us that we (NA) doesn’t make any promises, nor do we endorse anything. We
have no celebrities who are the face of Narcotics Anonymous.

Tradition Eleven says that NA is about helping other addicts find a way to live without drugs. We believe that if you want what we have, then this is the way to achieve it. It is known that complete abstinence isn’t for everyone, yet, this is how it works for us. We have grown from a handful of meetings to over 161,000 meetings all over the world since 1953. Very simply, what this tradition teaches us is that Narcotics Anonymous is enough. Each member speaks honestly from their heart, and the love in the rooms, along with the identification amongst other addicts, is enough to keep us growing like we are.

There is so much more to this tradition. But, for now, we don’t need to do or be anything other than what we are. When we integrate the steps and the traditions into our lives, it gives us the spiritual foundation to live in this world. In fact, words aren’t even needed, because working the traditions and the steps allows others a chance to see the changes for themselves. One of the things I like to share with my sponsees is the perspective that one could choose to wear their recovery like their favorite outfit; with pride. One could say that every thread in the fabric has been earned, and with every day clean, inventory done, newcomers listened to, and hard situations experienced, becomes another stitch in your outfit. You will wake up one day and everyone will see that you are very comfortable with yourself and who you have become. This is an example of how, individually, this tradition is demonstrated, and is why we believe in attraction rather than promotion. Every ounce of wisdom, integrity, humility, and self acceptance you have shows! Recently, my sponsor from many years ago added to this outfit story. What she added was that over time our favorite outfit may need to be altered. Just as our size changes, so do our beliefs and our interpretations of the program. The clarity and simplicity we have learned about in the tenth tradition, are applicable here also. We are just getting comfortable in our outfit and the eleventh tradition…

Caryl K

My Name is Steven and I am an addict. My clean date is March 24, 2010. I believe today that I was born with this disease, and it stayed active for 48 years. I have done a lot of work to recover from this disease and can see symptoms of active addiction in my life as far back as I can remember. I used whatever drugs were available to run from my life, some more frequently then others. The result was always the same, hopelessness, demoralization, emptiness.

I first heard of NA in a recovery house in Tucson, owned and operated by a NA member. This man took me to my first NA meeting. I was under the influence of a mood-altering substance and terrified. It is an experience I will never forget. Fortunately, it is an experience I never have to live again. I still go to meetings today, but never under the influence of any mind- or mood-altering substances and never terrified. A few weeks after my first NA meeting God used the cops to stop me again and put me in the position to get the help I needed. There were NA meetings in the county jail I was housed in which I attended and a corrections officer in charge of programs gave me my first Basic Text. I read this book and my life was changed. I have not stopped reading this book since.

In late 2010 I was introduced to sponsorship behind the walls. I connected with them, was given a sponsor whom I still work with today. He and I have been through a lot together and my life is changed as a result. He has been clean over 30 years and I have been clean over 10. He tells me I have helped him as he has helped me. I am grateful for that. Thanks Marty.

I have less then 2 year left to serve on this sentence and will be released again into free society. I know if I continue to do what I am doing today, then I have nothing to fear. I am going to continue to work the NA program of recovery until that day, through that day, and after that day. Success is guaranteed. We have never seen a person fail to find recovery that lives the NA program. That is who I am today and who I intend to always be. Thank God for NA.

Steven A
Stinky Goat

“In short, the straight-forward and good person should be like a smelly goat – you know when they are in the room with you.”

This quote is not directly from Narcotics Anonymous, but I feel like it truly speaks to a part of my own recovery journey in NA. This quote comes from Marcus Aurelius, and his writings and influences on Stoicism have become a part of my own personal recovery. His words fit into the spiritual principles that I am learning in NA. At first glance you may read “smelly goat” and the rest of the quote may be lost. Why the fuck would I want to be a “smell goat?” Reasonable response to this quote, but the meat of this quote speaks to our ability to live the spiritual principles. In recovery, I have learned that I need to act the spiritual principles and not just say them out loud. When I tell someone that I am honest today, I do not immediately go out into the world and manipulate and lie, so I can get what I want. NO! This means that wherever I am, you can feel the “stink” of honesty on me because I am honest, PERIOD! I do not just share in meetings that I am willing. NO! When I talk to my sponsor and other members of NA, I willingly try the tools that they suggest. I also pray to my higher power and open my spirit up to my higher power’s guidance. Today, I don’t just write it in my journal that I am open-minded. NO! I practice this open-mindedness when I listen to the group conscience of my home group and service committees and allow for the consideration that my way may not be the best way for everyone. Ultimately, whenever I walk into a room, I want everyone to know that I will live according to the spiritual principles to the best of my ability. I want people to recognize in my actions that I am the person that I say that I am. I want to be that “stinky goat” because I want to be authentic in my life today. I want to live and act according to the spiritual principles. Thanks, as always, to the program of Narcotics Anonymous.

Stephanie B

We are always looking for contributions from our membership. Each month we seek an article for the steps, traditions and the concepts for that month. Do you have something to say? Email NAtimes@arizona-na.org

Zooming across the pond

Its 2020, during the pandemic, and NA face to face meetings are scarce. I happened upon this zoom meeting and I was now in a foreign land. Yes, they spoke English, but they had this slang that I was trying to decode. I tried to look up the island on a map online, it was a tiny island, and I could not find it. Not seeing it on a map kind of made it magical in my mind. The tiny island is within the country of Ireland. Ireland the land of green, music, and joking around. At first, I felt like an Addict peaking into a meeting almost like peering through a crack in the door. I joined the Zoom meetings, 3x a week. Two other Americans and myself all females I might add were regulars. At first it was individuals sharing their personal story followed by open sharing. As time went on, we started reading the JFT and sharing. As the group bonded as we do over time, we were invited to become members of the homegroup for which us American ladies happily agreed. After that we had a group conscience on Zoom, we created a new group format, and it strengthen us as a group. Us ladies were encouraged to begin chairing meetings and with that brought some of our Zoom technology we used in America. We began with the traditions study and now a step study. What began to happen organically is some of the newer members became encouraged to work the steps and get a sponsor which is truly one of the benefits of sharing in meetings about step work. The group continues to grow in strength not in numbers but in care and support of each other. We are all in this together truly. We laugh, we cry, we console, we encourage, and share this gift called recovery. Grateful for NA which continues to teach me daily the love of the fellowship worldwide is strong.

Sandra M.
In my own words this is my translation for IP # 7

After all my years of heartache, loneliness, and misery, when I finally began to rationalize minimize or just plain lapse into denial I started to delude myself about the real depth of the problem..."Am I an addict?

With that last shred of self honesty in one hand and this IP in the other I answered the 29 questions in this IP.

Answering the questions gave me my first spiritual awakening that I was an addict and that there was a possibility that I was going to relapse over and over again unless I made a change in my life.

In my opinion only two of the questions are not about the circumstances involved around the use of drugs. That's questions 18 and 23.

By doing this IP I realized that I had fears and I then questioned my sanity at that point.

The actual number of yes responses wasn't as important as how I felt inside about how addiction had affected my life.

I have learned that addiction is a disease with which without recovery ends in jails institutions and possibly death.

Addiction took away my pride my self-esteem, my family's trust and even my desire to live at one point.

After completing IP # 7 the hardest thing for me was admitting that I had a problem and that I was an addict.

At that point I started to go to meetings more often, I got a sponsor, and I realized that I was going to have to change my behavior and I was going to have to start asking for help which I desperately needed. and I learned all about unmanageability in my life. This IP helped me to restore my life and to stay clean another day.

Love,
Barry N.

WANT TO BE OF SERVICE? NA HAS OPENINGS AND WE NEED YOUR WILLINGNESS.

West Valley Area
- RCM 1
- RCM 2
- Outreach Chair
- Alternate Treasurer

East Valley Area
- Vice Chair
- Literature Chair
- Alt Literature Chair
- Alternate Treasurer
- Activities Chair
- Alternate Guidelines Chair
- RCM 2

Phoenix Area
- Vice Treasurer
- Activities Chair
- Outreach Chair
- H&I Chair

Got a phone & want to be of service?

Simple way of one addict helping another!
6 months clean time requirement.
6 hour shift 1x/week

Email: phoenixhelpline@arizona-na.org

Find Virtual or In-Person Meetings
Regional and Area Information
Donate
Event Information
Learning to use our literature helps us stay clean, the solutions are always in there.

Across
3. "We get _______ with our understanding of these steps." (pg 28)
5. "Perhaps this _______ difficult or painful." (pg 29)
7. "We have found that _______ is a lack of faith." (pg 29)
8. "Addicts tend to live _______ lives." (pg 32)
9. "Writing will _______ the lid off of our pressure cooker." (pg 30)
10. "When we pray and take _______ it always goes better for us." (pg 30)
11. "This step has the _______ of being difficult; in reality, it is quite simple." (pg 29)
15. "We found that we do not recover physically, _______ or spiritually overnight." (pg 27)
16. "We have found that fear is a lack of _______ and we have found a loving, personal God to whom we can turn." (pg 27)
19. "The important thing is that we do our _______." (pg 30)
20. "Although He already knows, the _______ must come from our own lips to be truly effective." (pg 31)
12. "When we ignore our feelings, the _______ becomes too much for us." (pg 29)
13. "Sharing the exact _______ of our wrongs sets us free to live." (pg 30)
14. "Willingness is what we _______ for in Step Six." (pg 33)
17. "We were entirely ready to have God remove _______ these defects of character." (pg 33)
18. "Eventually faith, _______ and acceptance replace pride and rebellion." (pg 34)
21. "We may _______ be able to remember all of our past mistakes." (pg 32)
24. "We _______ approach old defects with an open mind." (pg 33)
26. _______ self-assessment is one of the keys to our new way of life." (pg 27)
28. "We _______ about the things that bother us here and now." (pg 28)

Down
1. "We _______ make sure that they know what we are doing and why we are doing it." (pg 31)
2. "We begin to long for _______ from these defects." (pg 33)
4. "Where we were proud, we now find that we cannot get away with _______." (pg 33)
6. "We learn that we are growing when we make new _______ instead of repeating old ones." (pg 34)
11. "This step will _______ our motives and our actions." (pg 32)
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East Valley Area Newsletter

Known as

“Press Release”

wants to hear from those on the inside of the walls
who have begun working a program of recovery and
now have found their new way to begin life.

Tell us:

1. without excessive details the drugs or drug class in which you used?
2. What did using cause you to lose or give up/away?
3. Where did you first heard about NA?
4. If working with a sponsor, is he an inmate, someone you kept from before, or by writing to “Sponsorship Behind The Walls”?
5. What keeps your interests in NA alive?
6. How long you’ll remain incarcerated before release and your concerns for that eventful day?

A. Keep your story concise and to fit one page or less of paper.

B. No need to over emphasize with cussing.

Once completed send your story to:

East Valley Area Narcotics Anonymous – Newsletter

PO Box 5264

Mesa AZ 85211
Attention

Making a difference

Inmates!

Show your creativity

We would like to publish your artwork. The Valley Newsletter is looking to involve the members of the fellowship from 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 – East Valley Area Newsletter - PO Box 5264 - Mesa AZ 85211
Sponsorship
Behind The Walls
“How It Works”

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 time longer then six months from their release date.

Arizona Region 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