



# THE NA TIMES

**Step 9:** “We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

Ah, the wreckage of our past has finally come to haunt us. I’m sure for some of us this is true, particularly when we are new. Fear of the 4<sup>th</sup> step has nothing on this step. Probably the best part about this step is that it comes after step 8 and we are brimming with willingness..... Every step needs to be worked with a sponsor, but I can’t imagine how this step would go if I was trying to make amends without getting some direction.

When it was time to make an amends to my father, my sponsor and I discussed how I was going to do this. Because my Dad was old, he particularly liked when he got an actual handwritten letter. We decided to send him a letter. Weeks passed and finally I got a card with some writing in it from my dad. He said I was forgiven and let’s not discuss this any further. We had a great relationship until he passed.

My unrealistic expectations had to tamped down because I tend to project how well or how poorly an amends is going to go instead just doing it and letting the chips fall where they may. At the top of my amends list of course, was me. This amends is not going to done overnight. I had done so much damage to myself over so long a period that it was (is) going to take some time.

Without going into morbid detail here, I had dug myself a hole that I continued to excavate on for years in my early recovery. To get out of this ongoing disaster, I had to get outside help. It took a few years to make this amends to myself but the freedom I got from doing it is immense. Today, I try an ongoing amends to myself by treating me better. As a recent speaker I heard say, I need to practice ongoing love for myself. I thought that was so kick ass and so applies in my life today.

**Tradition 9:** “N.A, as such, ought never be organized, but may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

This is pointed out in our literature as defining how N.A. functions. I have been in N.A. service for many years and hear it said quite often “that we ought never be organized.” However, this does not give our service boards and committees the freedom to operate in an irresponsible or haphazard manner. It is my wish that I will always be the best trusted servant I can be, keeping in mind my love for N.A. and my obligation to it.

Taking a closer look at tradition 9 it refers to N.A. as such. So exactly what does that mean? our little white book tells us” N.A. is a nonprofit society of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.”

To me that is the heart of our fellowship where the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is on

display and our message is available to all who seek relief from active addiction.

This is the primary purpose of the N.A. group. For the group to be as focused as possible on the primary purpose they join to form service boards or committees to do the other things necessary to support N.A. as a whole. We found out that when we work together, we can accomplish a lot more than individual groups.

There is also the last part of this tradition requiring these service bodies to be directly responsible to those they serve. This is best accomplished by regular communication between all involved. I have found honest, regular communication to be the key to the better personal relationships, and this also applies to our service structure and to those they serve.

*Sherwood T.*

### Something Different

The ninth concept states that “All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.” Where do these different viewpoints come from? They may come from addicts who are part of the service group, or they may come from addicts who are not part of the service group. For example, at a home group business meeting, viewpoints may come from those who are part of the home group, as well as addicts who are not part of the home group. Although we may attend business meetings of more than one group, it is important that we only cast votes at one group. It is important that all viewpoints be considered.

It is particularly important to hear the viewpoints of those who may disagree with what seems to be the consensus. It may be easier to hear the viewpoints of those who agree, but it is important to seek out opposing points of view. Sometimes everyone will agree on a course of action except for a single addict. It is still important to hear that 1 addict’s point of view even though the overwhelming majority are going to win the vote.

It is important to hear the viewpoints of those who have varying amounts of clean time. Sometimes an addict without a lot of clean time may have personal experience with an issue we are considering. We should not just seek out the opinions of those with substantial clean time.

Concept 9 is not only about our obligation to listen to all viewpoints, but also about how we are all encouraged to speak up and not keep our views to ourselves. It can be intimidating to have a different viewpoint than everyone else, or to have a different viewpoint than a popular addict with substantial clean time, but we help form the best group conscience possible when we have the courage to express our viewpoints and not hold them in. It is important to have this courage, while remaining respectful to everyone.

By blocking out an individual’s contribution to group conscience, we are blocking out the guidance of a loving God who expresses himself through everyone. It is important that we not be so self-centered to think that the way we see something, is the way everyone else sees it.

*Dave K, West Tennessee Area*

**The NA Way**  
**October 2019**  
**Volume 36,**  
**Number 4**

## A moment of silence

Many of us believe it was the prayers of our loved ones, family, and friends that eventually brought our broken souls to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. Many of us have no idea how we arrived here to hear the lifesaving message.

As for myself, by the time I arrived there was no one left to pray for me. I had no friends except the acquaintances I’d established in the streets while getting, using, and finding ways and means to get more. I hadn’t seen or spoken to my family in more than a decade. Their lives continued, and if they thought of me at all, it was to wonder when the knock on the door or the telephone call would come to tell them of my death.

Addicts got me here. My life was saved in that moment of silence at the end of the meeting, when we lock together and NA members’ energy and prayers to Higher Powers of many diverse understandings enter the cosmos. That moment, to me, has such special significance. I cover my face and I picture the alleys and the backs of dumpsters where I spent a majority of my time over a 23-year period. I picture faceless addicts and a healing ray touching them.

Today I am irritated when I see this important aspect of our meetings being neglected. It seems, so often, that everyone is in such a hurry: get up, pray, get out. That moment has become a mere three seconds—and is not always silent. Where is the gratitude for our predecessors and the time they spent to pray us into NA? Where is the compassion for those still wandering in dark places?

I want a full 15 seconds of silence—real silence. My gratitude speaks when I carry this message to addicts in my area and around the world. Our moment of silence saves lives. I know, because without a doubt, it saved mine.

*Debra R, California, USA*



## Face-to-face beats interface

When I began to hear about NA meetings on the Internet, I thought I should see what it was all about. I had been online since the old days when a 2400-baud modem was *the* status symbol of a computer geek. Back then, you saw a nice, blue screen with stationary text. No colorful images. No buttons to "click" on. In fact, most personal computer owners rarely interfaced with other computers on the Internet of those years. Electronic Bulletin Boards were all the rage, but there weren't any dedicated to the topic of recovery in NA.

It wasn't until the early 1990s that recovery meetings began happening on some of the commercial networks. I found a meeting online and started "going" to it. It was interesting and new to me, so I kept going.

It didn't take too long for me to become disenchanted with the way the meetings were conducted, the way people shared, and the feelings I had after I left the meeting.

The online meetings were so slow! I couldn't keep myself in the mood for recovery. Watching someone type thirteen sentences for seven minutes was agonizing!

The meetings didn't hold my attention. I would go cook some food, answer the front door, stop by the bathroom, and come back to the computer to find the same person sharing. I would take even longer breaks, come back to

the computer, and scroll up to see what happened while I was gone.

I became unpopular in some of the online meetings because I would cut and paste large amounts of personal writing from my files on step work I was doing. I thought it was not only efficient, but good, deep, emotional sharing as well. However, others felt it wasn't honest because it wasn't spontaneous. I didn't understand their logic, but I respected their feelings and so stopped doing that.

Then I became disturbed with the tone and substance of some members'

deny some uncomfortable fact about my life or to prop up my poor self-esteem. I've learned to forgive others and myself for that. But on the Internet, it seems doubly easy for us to use anonymity as a shield from others who are online. To me, it doesn't build trust in my heart. I don't like that.

One of the things that really drew me to online meetings was the opportunity to hear from addicts all around the world. I still like that part. However, I realized that for me, I had to go to "real" meetings to get what I needed from recovery.

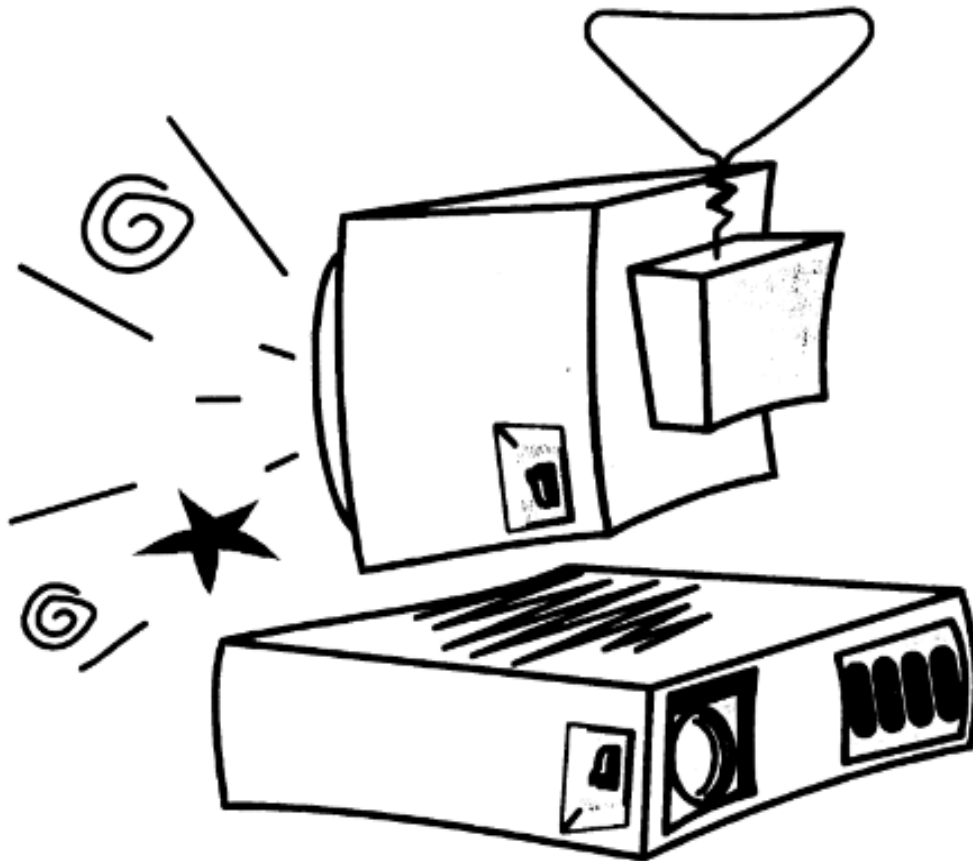
There's a feeling I get from looking another addict in the eye that I don't get from watching text scroll across my computer screen.

Then I saw that some members wanted to have these online meetings registered as groups with the WSO. I didn't see the point, and it seemed like they were more concerned with being online and proud of it than they were with carrying the message. These NA members were vehement about their right to put "literature" on the "table" (that is, to have copies of NA literature

available for downloading despite the fact that we haven't been assured our copyrights will be protected in this environment).

I really believe that online meetings can be a great tool for us to use in our recovery, especially for those NA members who are geographically isolated from other members. It's like the telephone; I use it as a tool in my recovery, but it doesn't replace my need for a face-to-face meeting with another addict to share the message of recovery.

Erik R, Hawaii



sharing. I began to distrust the motivations of those sharing online. Why? I don't know—maybe just because they sounded so *right* and always had something to say on every topic.

I then realized what was missing—the look that passed between one addict and another that said, "Here's the message. That's what I came here for." I didn't feel the ring of truth coming through the online sharing.

I'm not naïve. I know that "live" sharing in meetings isn't always honest either. I know this because I've lied to

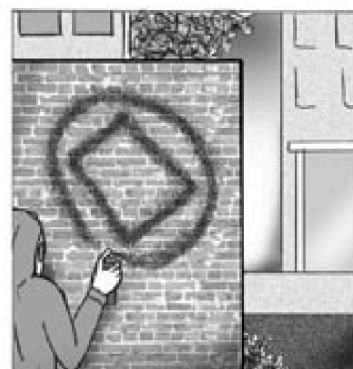
# UPCOMING EVENTS

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

PMS Women's Spiritual Retreat	Friday, September 16 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday, September 17 <sup>th</sup>
NA History Work Group Meeting	2:00 Saturday, September 16 <sup>th</sup>
Unity Campout	Friday, September 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Sunday, September 24 <sup>th</sup>
Talent Show	5:00pm September 30 <sup>th</sup>
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	10:30am Saturday, August 26 <sup>th</sup>

The NA Way – October 2004  
(Volume 21 Number 4)

## Home GROUP



# 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



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)

