



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

February 2023

From Behind the Walls: Don't Give up

How you feel all alone
 Stuck within your dreams
 You thought you'd find love...
 But you didn't
 You thought you'd have the perfect life...
 But you didn't
 So you stood there on the corner of your heart
 And in the end sold yourself to pain and guilt
 When the world gave up on you
 You then gave up on yourself
 You said,
 "Can anybody hear me?"
 You said,
 "Does anybody care?"
 But silence filled the air
 So instead you used drugs to disappear
 The world felt as if it was passing by you
 Your hopelessness rising
 There's only so much you can bare.
 Believe me I was there.
 I want you to know you're not alone
 I'm here by your side
 I'll walk with you through hell and back again
 I'll wipe those tears from your eyes my friend
 You're not forgotten
 I understand nobody wants to face their pain and
 guilt alone
 But together we can rise from our nightmare
 The struggle makes us beautiful
 And the battle makes us stronger
 So don't give up on life
 Don't give up on me
 Don't give up on you
 Everything will be okay
 I promise you

My image of Truth and Love
 -Shea

Dig These Cats! Part 2

"You guys here for the meeting?" Barb piped up.
 "Yeah....the new N.A. meeting." Andy replied.
 "We're it! C'mon, coffee's over here. So where'd you guys
 get clean?"

Meanwhile, a myriad of very young, bright and
 inquisitive faces stared up at us from the plush carpeted
 floor as we made our way through the ocean of bodies, as
 if we were the three wise men, come bearing gifts for the
 baby Jesus.

Andy was the only cat not floored by the menagerie of
 youths, their ages ranging from what appeared to be 15
 years of age to the eldest of about 19. The eldest was
 clearly directing the young ones, keeping what semblance
 of order you possibly could from this juvenile morass of
 playful souls. The meeting's ranks were being filled by an
 outpatient program called Today Incorporated, which he
 was the sole graduate of, having the most 'clean time' in
 the room, and so garnering the most respect. But it was
 clear, even as a young cat, he was wise beyond his years
 and a natural leader. He also had a smile that outshone
 Andy's, whose gravity well was irresistible. He would
 always introduce himself simply as George.

"I got off drugs in Eagleville, but have been attending
 A.A." Andy assured Barb.
 I chimed in with, "I was inpatient at Today Incorporated
 but escaped."

It was a wisecrack, but Barb didn't miss it, because she
 immediately came back with, "Yeah, Gestalt therapy ain't
 for everybody. I know you!" She suddenly exclaimed.

Uh-oh, you idiot! I thought, what did I do this time to this
 chick? But I was wrong.

-Phil

(Continued pg. 3)

As I think back to my first run at working the steps, it turned out that Step 2 became my favorite. At first glance, I immediately had issues with the word, “restore.” But we’ll come around to that. I tend to be a “Word-Girl” and like to be up in my head (although that’s the worst place for an addict to be). So let’s just start...

“We **CAME** to believe...” I **CAME** to the party. I **CAME** to work. I **CAME** to get high. When I take out the word “believe” and replace it with more familiar statements, it began to make sense that this step (like all steps) is an action step. “We **CAME**” is first and foremost, a simple act of metaphorically, *showing up!* In order to enjoy the party, get paid for work or get loaded, we had to show up. However, when we showed up, we were not always sure of what would/could occur next. We show up at the door, willing to go in and see what was in store for us.

“We came to believe **THAT** a Power...” I don’t know about you, but coming into the Program, I had some issues with God, religion, a High Power... to say the least. But as I worked this step, I noticed that it did NOT say, “We came to believe **IN** a Power...”. There was this guy (Michael P.) in the rooms **that** showed up to every meeting; This guy **that** showed up to every event; This guy **that** showed up anytime I needed a ride. I did not have to believe **IN** Mikey, but I was able to come to believe **THAT** Mikey would be there and be there for me.

“...a **POWER**, greater than ourselves...” At this point, I just kept trying to trust the fact that the literature says that the **ONLY** thing a Higher Power of our understanding is that it must be **LOVING, CARING** and **GREATER THAN ME**. [More will be revealed in Step 3].

“...**COULD** restore us to sanity.” The word, “could” is conditional. Most humans (addicts) have experienced conditional love (the lucky ones, have experienced unconditional love). However, with the only requirement for a Higher Power of *your understanding* be that it is loving and caring, this is **NOT** a conditional love! My Higher Power does not withhold or play games like, “Maybe I will, maybe I won’t...”. The concept of “**COULD** restore me” is only conditional if I **SHOW UP**. If I do the work: go to meetings, get a homegroup, get a sponsor, do the steps and be of service, then my Higher Power can (and will) restore me to me to sanity.

“...**RESTORE** us to sanity.” When I first started this step, I revolted at the idea of being restored to anything about my life. My life sucked, hence becoming an addict. However, when looking up the word “restore”, in it’s Latin origin, it said this: To rebuild, bring back to the condition it was meant to be. So, this did not mean that my HP would bring me back to what I was/had before I picked up. It means that I would be rebuilt or brought back to what/who I **WAS MEANT TO BE!**

By Rosey DG

Concept 2 –*The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.*

While I am someone who prides himself on being of service to our fellowship and knowledge of our literature, I must fully admit that writing this article was quite challenging and humbling. Even though I had read the 12 Concepts countless times during business/service meetings and even glanced at the 12 Concepts of NA service book very early on in my service journey, I had never taken the deep dive truly required to not only understand the service work I have been doing, but also fully grasp how the Concepts ensure that the service structure is forever devoted to service, never government.

Because the service structure was created **BY** the groups, the groups have the final authority for what the fellowship does above the group level, all with the

common goal of carrying the message of NA recovery. As it says in the 12 Concepts of NA service book “our fellowship’s service boards and committees exist to help groups share their experience with one another, provide tools which help groups function better, attract new members to group recovery meetings, and carry the NA message further than any single group could carry it alone” and because of this are a very important resource to Narcotics Anonymous globally. But without the ability for the groups not communicate what their wants and needs are, it would be very possible for the different subcommittees to lose touch with what is actually desired by the groups. The second concept is the answer to any potential issue that could arise based on this.

(Continued Pg. 4)

"You were my paperboy, weren't you?" Barb asked.
 "You live in Red Rose Gate?" I responded in disbelief.
 Well, sure enough - I was the entire subdivision's paperboy long before I had become an addict, and this being some ten years later, I hadn't recognised her.
 She then turned her high beams on Kenny.
 "Hi, do I know you?" She flirted.

Kenny, clearly the best looking cat of the bunch, turned scarlet - he was painfully shy.
 "Don't think so..." was all she could get out of him as he shook his head 'no' while looking at me laughing. Barb was an artist and had an extraordinary eye for beauty, and truth be told - Kenny was a young Adonis whom many an N.A. kitten would tumble for. From that day on, he would no longer be my wingman, but I would become his on every occasion we'd meet an attractive girl at a dance or a meeting.

Just then George called everybody's attention to the time and the need to start the meeting. Bodies came up from the carpet, the shenanigans stopped immediately, as the chatter dropped to hushed murmurings in the room and like magnets, chairs were pulled into a circle from the surrounding walls as the excited young cats filled them. All attention was focused on George and Barb as the readings got shuffled and handed out.

"O.K., welcome to the Tuesday night meeting of The Bristol Group of Narcotics Anonymous, I'm George and I'm an addict."

The room reverberated with the booming response, "HI GEORGE!"
 And with that, the first and only N.A. meeting in Bristol, Pennsylvania and possibly all of Lower Bucks County had begun.

Little did Ken and I know, our faces masking the uncertainty we felt, we had stumbled into history. We had just become a part of the beginning of something so big that its impact would be felt around the world.

(to be continued)...

By Phil



Celebrating recovery in Arizona since 1987!

EAST VALLEY ACTIVITIES PRESENTS

NA Skyline Serenity HIKE

Butcher Jones Trail

At Saguaro Lake

4th SATURDAY
February 25, 2023

(\$8 Tonto Pass required per car → CARPOOL! Buy pass offsite @ Big 5, Walgreens on Power Road, etc.)

We Will Meet at Evergreen Park @ 5th St & Country Club Rd. In MESA @ 8:45 AM To Carpool & Leave @ 9:00 AM. Or Meet at the Trailhead Hike starts about 10AM

Directions:
 Take Highway 87 North Toward Payson OR - From Payson drive South on 87 ! Turn east at exit 199 [milepost 199] About 3 miles down the paved Bush Highway, turn left at Butcher Jones Beach sign, and follow the 25 mph paved road for 2 miles down to the PAVED Beach parking area.
Hike to Start about 10:00 am

BRING: Newcomer, Water, Snack/Lunch, & PMA

Let us know if you plan to hike Chuck H. 480-236-4859

"The Wilderness is Open for Sharing"

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Right off the bat, that first word eased me. I thought, “Ok, I no longer have to go it on my own. That first step has more than shown and proved to me that I require assistance from outside myself.” “WE” provided a lifeboat in the form of a hand or hands. The possibility that other people had successfully done this before me was implied. I was then easily able to ascertain that if they can do it, I probably can too.

It’s a fairly self-explanatory step, and maybe the most gentle—the easiest to go along with, with the least amount of action. That said, it takes plenty of action. As for each of the steps, it’s an ongoing practice. It’s predicated on the mere possibility that there is something more than just me, so that’s pretty easy to come to terms with. The second part is a relief. I don’t have to see proof or need anything other than believing in the possibility of something more than me.

Yes, in the throes of my insanity, there were times where I literally believed myself “God,” but even in my most self-indulgent moments, I didn’t believe I was all there was. Whether it be a person or people, a place or places, thing or things, or a combination thereof, I can acknowledge that there is a power greater than myself. Furthermore, I must and do believe at very least that it has the capability and/or capacity—not necessarily the desire—to help me live in the world, at least to the degree I did at one point in the past, when things weren’t so out of balance—ie, before I required restoration to sanity. If I have trouble intellectually or otherwise, in doubting that I’m insane, I just need go back to the first step. There is plenty of ammunition there to reopen my eyes to the reality that I require ongoing restoration to be able to function successfully in the world I live in.

To get to a point where I have come to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity took a period of time. The realization of the futility of, that I cannot any longer attempt to manage my life alone nor believe that I can control things outside myself, continues to be paramount for me to successfully work the second step.

When I admit that I am powerless over my addiction and that my life has become unmanageable, I require “something more than just me.” I get it from certain people, books and other things, in nature, and via prayer and meditation. I sometimes feel this “Power greater than myself” just of itself. This something “more than just me” I have come to believe could restore me to sanity. Yes, it could.

Will

2nd Concept: *Continued*

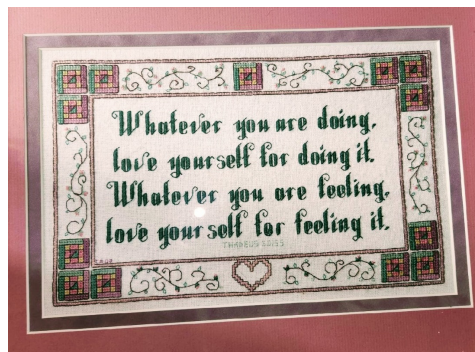
But within this authority comes the responsibility of providing the ideas and guidance necessary, as well as the required support to both the different subcommittees (and each groups elected GSR). If we do not have members that are willing to be of service, or have elected members that are unable to carry out the responsibilities assigned to that service position, the groups are setting up the service structure for failure. Bringing the ideas and conscious of a group is only the beginning of the process; actually supporting and nurturing that conscious is how the individual groups of NA (and the service structure they created) can fully mature and materialize into the amazing fellowship I am so incredibly grateful to be a member of.

In my opinion, one of the most valuable elements of the Second Concept is that it gives our groups (and the members within them) the opportunity to help

continuously guide and grow the fellowship of NA continuously. No matter what changes may arise on the planet earth, individual groups of this fellowship will always be able to voice concerns, give guidance and possibly even change our areas of focus within our service structure to optimize our ability to get our life saving message out to the addict who is still suffering. So often I had heard “that is what we do”, when in fact, based on this concept, groups will always have the authority to challenge the preconceived standards, (especially if they do not feel that our primary purpose is being achieved) to best maximize the potential positive impact of our fellowship.

Matthew M.

When your sponsor dies, even if he or she is no longer your sponsor, many feelings arise. We recently lost a valued person, Caroline M., and many of her sponsees, me included, had a lot of sadness over her death. Below is a beautiful piece of artwork Caroline made and gifted to a sponsee, probably something she worked on sitting in a meeting.



Here's what one sponsee wrote about her.

For a while, during the time Caroline M. was my sponsor, she would meet me for lunch. We both worked in downtown Phoenix, and we would sit on a bench in a shady park, where fountains with frogs evoked a long-ago era when Phoenix had been a riparian area. My life then was the opposite of that geographical story, as I was as a few years out of a dry and unloving marriage, and was beginning to date, going from an arid lonely relationship into a lush time of possibilities.

I loved Caroline's style, as straight to the point. She was sharp as a whip, and so often right. Although she didn't pull punches, I was several years clean and I knew the value of a clear message. I resonated with the ring of truth in her words, even when I didn't want to hear them – usually. I remember one time when I questioned her advice. When she found out I was dating within the fellowship and I mentioned I knew I had to date I wondered what clean time requirements I should have for a potential mate, she said, “How long clean do you have?”

I said, “Eight years.”

“In your case,” she said, “I would recommend you not date anyone with less than ten years clean. I protested that was impossible, but she just replied I could take the suggestion or not take it, it was my choice.

Later I found out about her love story, she had met her husband at when he was just newly clean, and they took an elevator together in an NA convention straight up to love, and then marriage.

I complained to my friends in recovery. How could she tell me what to do, when she herself had dated a newcomer, not just dated, but married? My friends pointed out maybe that's why she knows you need to date someone with significant clean time. Then it all made sense.

One thing I loved about Caroline was that she could sponsor me via email as well as she could in person. She came across warmer and more loving in emails than she did in person. I loved it that she was so clear and concise in her written communication. Since I am myself a writer and so busy it was hard to find time to me, I found it a useful skill in a sponsor. In person she seemed reserved and formal, even to the point of stiffening up and rejecting my enthusiastic extraverted greetings, but in her emails, she showed not just a clear understanding of my various life situations, but also a depth of spiritual principals that suffused her life.

I remember when Caroline was furloughed from her job. She talked to me honestly about her fear and anxiety. She told me it was the program that got us through hard times, but it was very natural to feel those feelings. Having that freedom to feel the fear and tension when I got laid off, or when I waited to find out a diagnosis for a potentially life-threatening condition, helped me to walk through those times better than pretending that I felt okay. Knowing my recovery hero could honestly admit difficulty with ongoing life challenges helped me much more than fake platitudes ever would have.

At some point in my dating career after my divorce I had made the mistake of hooking up with a married person. My previous sponsor had told me that it was okay, since I was not the one who broke the vow. But it still felt wrong to me. It felt like being an accessory – even if I didn't “rob the bank,” I provided “the getaway car”.

I wanted to make amends. I knew I couldn't make direct amends because it risked harming the innocent people in the equation more than the act itself had. When I asked Caroline how I could possibly make amends for this deed, she simply and yet with great conviction, “Never. Do. It. Again.”

Later when a married person was flirting with me in a meeting, the temptation and her words echoed in my mind. Overlaid the cute face and flashing eyes for a quick interlude that I knew would be easy, and yet so, so wrong for me were Caroline's school teacher glare and her voice saying “Never. Do. It. Again”

By Rosie

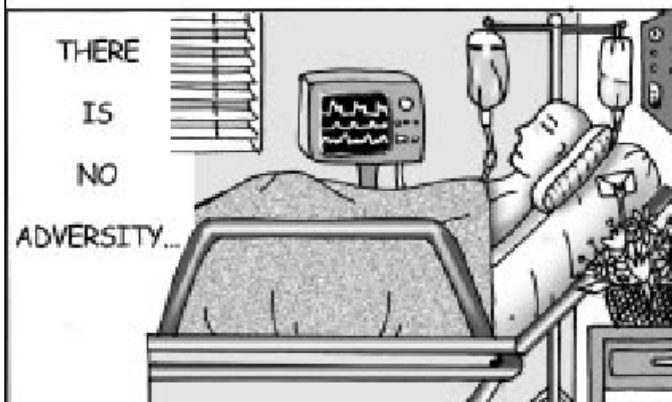
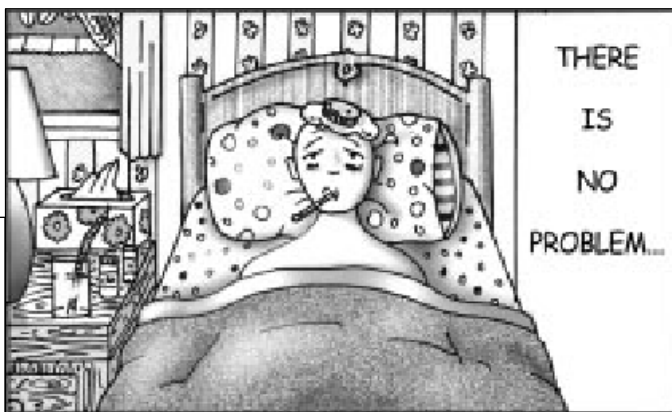
(Continued in the March 2023 Newsletter)

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

ARCNA Fundraiser Bingo, Pizza, Speaker, Raffle	February 11 th 12:00pm
EVA Valentine's Day Formal	February 11 th 6:30pm
WV/PASC Dance	February 18 th 4:00pm
Fire Side Meeting	February 18 th 6:00pm
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	February 25 th 10:00am
AZ Regional CAR/CAT Presentations	February 27 th 10:00am

The NA Way – July 2002
(Volume 19 Number 3)



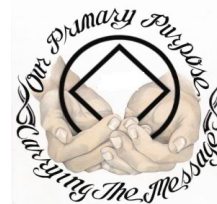
Sponsorship Behind the Walls

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:



LIVE, LAUGH & LOVE — VALENTINE'S DAY FORMAL DANCE

When:
Saturday,
February 11th, 2023
Doors Open at 6:30pm

Where:
Community Christian Church
1701 S College Ave
Tempe, AZ 85281

Come join us for an Italian dinner and comedic show.

Meeting follows at 8:00pm

Dance Following the meeting

Fellowship, raffles, and merchandise available.

For Dinner and Show ticket: Contact Tony L. at (480) 547-4561