



# THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

March 2023

## *The Demon of my Addiction*

It speaks to me not of words but of images, impulses and of memories. It can come at any moment, a whisper in the shadow or an embrace in the dead silence. From the deep recesses of my mind it slithers into my thoughts waiting to strike and inject me with its venom, wrap the scales of my uncertainty and choke the good of me. It wants to devour me whole and take its time ingesting me until there is nothing left.

Addiction is more than a bag you buy, a drug you take or a needle you inject. It has been there before your first hit and it will remain until your last breath. Recovery is possible but relapse is probable without direction or guidance—and left abandoned, it will whisper in your head until it is all you can hear. It can break you and make you its own.

I hear its call and feel its grasp reaching for me. Even being away from my drug of choice, seeking recovery and therapy, my addictions ring in my head like a distant bell calling me home. But this home is not warm and cozy. It is destitute, cold and lonely. Its floors creak, the paint withers and the walls have cracks. A demon walks the halls and beckons me into one of the rooms.

Each room is a part of my addiction. Use. Isolation. Depravity. Moral bankruptcy. Sins of self strengthen the demon. It smiles at me with promises of quick happiness with the price of pieces of my soul. It knows how to sell me ash and death for the price of faith and love. It deceives me with false thoughts and fear. It wants to corrupt and grows stronger when my resolve has dwindled and defeat feels inevitable.

The demon of my addiction knows me better than I know myself so I must remain vigilant. I chose this program, this fellowship, this way of life, because I did not want to lose myself for good. My body was depleted, I did not care for the material things I lost, compared to the sting of unconditional love being torn away from me. Those I love without end being ripped from my life due to decisions to not feel anything at all for something I thought I needed but did not want.

I bound myself to something I did not believe in and upon the ritual I left behind my conviction to be true to myself. I manipulated my own beliefs and in time even though my love for those of my blood did not waiver, the love for myself crumbled like a castle made of sand hit by waves from the ocean. I felt I had few reasons to live. Their hands are smaller than mine but their hearts, dreams and hopes are bigger. My love for them brought me here and in time I knew I needed to make myself whole again and do this for me. I have found myself through the steps and piece by piece I take myself back from the demon and cut it down with love, honesty, compassion and faith. My soul has far to go but I have found my calling as to write not only for you, my fellow addicts, but to use my words to tell stories, to speak of my journey through recovery, to write to my daughters, who are not in my life right now but through the letters I am giving them a piece of me. I hope one day they will read them and come to understand forgiveness and love.

The demon not need win your soul. It will not go away but it can be arrested. Light can be let in and the demon hates the light. It cannot stand joy, happiness and hard work put into one's self. It wants the easy way in and even in those moments you hear the whisper of its voice calling you back, you can make a call of your own. You can attend a meeting or pick up our literature, write a gratitude list or just reach out to another addict. We know the demon, it speaks to us, we just need to learn to speak louder.

*Todd O.*

**Third Concept:** *“The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.”*

The NA groups maintain final responsibility and authority for the service structure they have created. Yet if they must involve themselves directly in making decisions for all of our service boards and committees, the groups will have little time or energy left to carry the recovery message in their meetings. For this reason, the groups entrust the

service structure with the authority to make necessary decisions in carrying out the tasks assigned to it.

The delegation of authority can do much to free up both our groups and our services. Service decisions not directly affecting the groups can be made expeditiously; our phonelines, H&I panels, public information efforts, and literature development projects can move forward at full speed to serve NA’s primary purpose. And our groups, not required to ratify every decision made on their behalf at every level of service, are freed to devote their full attention to carrying the NA message in their meetings. **(Cont. pg. 4)**

I retreated before I would have to make more amends in this world. And do you know what? I never had done that again – I've never been party to someone else breaking their promises of fidelity. I know, like using, I never have to do that again, and that feels freeing. Thanks Caroline!

Caroline always rejected my deep loving greetings at meetings, and it began to hurt me. I knew why because she told me. In the past, she had gotten close to a prior sponsee, who had also become her best friend. When this dear friend relapsed, Caroline never again wanted to go through that pain. From then on, she said, she always kept all sponsees at arm's length.

I had had a similar experience. I knew the wrenching pain and grief when some relapses who is not only your sponsee but also is best friend.

My conclusion of what to do about this was different than Caroline's. After prayer and meditation, I felt something akin to hope. I realized that I could walk

through anything, grief included, using this program. I realized for me that the risk of a broken heart was not worth the pain of a closed heart.

My decision was that I would take that risk of continuing to get close to my sponsees and anyone else in my life, as much as I could. And no, I am not that good at it, but continuing to open my heart has led to a lot more growth than when I close it back down.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### ***Step 3: We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.***

For many years, I sat in meetings and listened to the steps recited, but I had no idea what the ideas meant in terms of what I had the power to do in my life to put these concepts into action. I loved the idea of the third step, making the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him, but what exactly did that mean? I felt there must be more to this than merely saying words.

I had questions like should I get up and go to a job I hate? Whose will is involved in that? Should I get up at all, since I don't really even want to? If I just lay here all day, is that my will and how could I know? Is it God's will for me to continue on in a relationship in which I am anxious and unhappy? Or is it my will that is causing the anxiety and unhappiness because I want something more than what God has offered me? Do I just accept my unhappiness? Could it really be God's will for me to be unhappy like this? And on and on.

This is what I have come to believe. God's will for me to be happy and at peace regardless of outer circumstances. Putting this into action means accepting some situations which are not my business and that I can't control, such as the choices my adult children make. When I try to interfere, what I convey to them is that I am judging their lives and putting my discomfort about their discomfort above their learning experiences. That job I hated? I quit, but I gave notice and honest feedback when asked why. The relationship I felt so dissatisfied in? I became willing to put my lifelong people-pleasing aside and speak words to the person, asking for what I needed and admitting to being dishonest for a long time in order to avoid the conflict I so deeply feared.

God's will is for me to love myself unconditionally and forgive myself for all the things I did when I did not love myself. It is having the courage to speak up for myself and also seeing my part in conflicts. It is choosing to be kind, rather than insisting that I am right.. It is the practice of rigorous honesty, with myself and others, and my unwavering belief that if I have to lie to get something, then I do not want it. It is listening to others without thinking about what I am going to say when it's my turn to talk. It is doing my best with whatever is in front of me and taking responsibility that my choices have led me to this moment. It is living each moment as though I had chosen it, dropping all lines of thinking in which the conclusion is that I am a victim.

This understanding has brought me peace.

*Karisma D*

I could never resist bouncing up to Caroline with my happy greeting, looking for that hug that she didn't want to give. But each time she brushed me off, it hurt me. Eventually I concluded that I needed to move on to someone more outwardly loving, who seemed happy to see me when we ran into each other at an event. But now I wonder, if I had been able to stick in some more with Caroline and accept her as she was and just love her, would it have made a difference?

Now, she has gone, and I will never be able to find out what might've happened if I had made the choice to stay her sponsee. Maybe it would've changed something, maybe not. I know she changed me forever, and for the better. I know I am truly powerless over the past. Today I wish to live in courage and faith and love. I just moved out of the Arizona area to another state. I am grieving my old fellowship. It is hard to be vulnerable, open my heart, come to new meetings with different formats, meet new people, and take that risk of love. The risk of loving a new fellowship comes with the risk of a broken heart. Writing this makes me remember that the program can walk me through anything. It helps me remember to take the chance.

We all fear the pain of rejection. I am not alone, never alone. I am not the only one hurting, and the lessons I learned from Caroline, both by positive example and from the less positive, can strengthen me to persevere. Caroline helped me by what she did and what she said. She was a great example of recovery when she was my sponsor and gave me gifts that I never have to lose., No matter what happened later in her story, I can keep writing my story. Hope is a spiritual principle that can lead me to courage, faith, and strength. I am sticking around to find out. The next story can end differently if I keep working the steps and growing.

*Rosie W., aka Rosie G.*  
**(Continued April Newsletter)**

8-10-22

When I was young I built a wall  
 Believing it could never fall  
 It was reinforced by my fear  
 And I felt myself disappear  
 Crouching low in my solace  
 Not realizing it meant I'd miss  
 The chance to connect and grow  
 With all I tried to get to know  
 I thought my heart was protected  
 Instead it was left, neglected  
 In isolation I began to slip  
 In darkness I began to trip  
 Over what I could not see  
 The wall blocked the path ahead of me  
 When loneliness set in  
 My thoughts arose to threaten  
 The peace I longed to feel  
 So I clung more to my will  
 To make it on my own  
 Yet I had never been shown  
 How to make the right choice  
 And the wall kept my voice  
 From being heard when I called out  
 Which led me to really doubt  
 That people truly cared  
 Since I never dared  
 Remove a brick so they could hear  
 My heart speak, or even peer  
 Into the darkness of my mind  
 I feared they'd leave if they were to find

The frightened child cowering inside  
 That wept each night, but never cried  
 For tears meant pain, and pain was real  
 And no trust was built to reveal  
 The horrors that held me back  
 I fed them so they wouldn't attack,  
 Slowly the dungeon became my home  
 In the comforting chaos I would roam  
 Peering out once in awhile  
 Hoping that by showing a smile  
 Everyone would be led to believe  
 That I was safe, but I was naive  
 For there came a day when I fell  
 And my stubbornness bore a hell  
 So when I began to tear my wall down  
 Fear swallowed me and I felt myself drown  
 I collapsed in frustration, my wall still stood  
 I felt I'd been defeated for good  
 Yet somehow with a few layers removed  
 A hand reached through, and for the first time proved  
 Not everyone can be deceived  
 They did what I thought could never be achieved  
 They taught me it's okay to be known  
 And I never have to be alone  
 Now over the years less wall is still standing  
 And the fear I feel is less demanding  
 And maybe someday  
 I'll even venture to say  
 I'm no longer held back  
 By the bricks I used to stack.

When I think about the third tradition, I think about how by following its intent, I can contribute to creating a safe space for everyone – newcomers, old timers, and everyone in between regardless of where they are in their recovery journey. When studying this tradition, its adherence always seemed like a no-brainer to me because I welcome everyone and anyone to meetings with open arms. Or so I thought.

When I sat down and really gave it thought and got honest with myself, I realized that outwardly, I’m always welcoming but that’s not always the case in my head. I found my thoughts weren’t always as pure as I’d have liked. I found many times where I judged people in meetings based on how they look, what they have or consequently don’t have, who they talked to, how they spoke and even what they said. As a human being, I know I have my prejudices and character defects which can cloud my thoughts, sometimes without me even being consciously aware.

But being self-aware of my prejudices and character defects just isn’t good enough for me today. In getting and staying clean, I want and need to be a better person than I was, so I started asking myself a few questions to help keep my thoughts in alignment with tradition three.

- Do I not welcome everyone who walks in regardless of appearance?
- Do I pay more or less attention to someone based on my attraction to them?
- Do I welcome and treat everyone the same, regardless of their drug(s) of choice?
- Do I feel there are some types of addicts I do not want in my group?
- Do I treat everyone equally?

I ask myself these questions throughout the day and then again when I take my daily inventory. I also pray, meditate, and then ask my higher power to remove my prejudices along with my character defects so that I may be free of anything and everything that would hinder me from being of service to anyone who is in need.

Sticking to this tradition’s meaning creates an inclusive atmosphere for everyone wanting to get clean and, in some cases, can ultimately be why a newcomer stays or goes. The choice to foster an atmosphere of inclusion is one guided by the third tradition and is up to me to continue.

**Third Concept:** “*The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.*”

We often use motions and guidelines to help us apply the Third Concept. We clearly describe each task we want accomplished, and the kind of authority we are delegating to those who will fulfill the task. However, even the most exhaustive set of guidelines cannot account for every eventuality. Our trusted servants will serve us best when we grant them the freedom to exercise their best judgment in fulfilling the responsibilities we’ve assigned them. Our services must remain directly accountable to those they serve, yet they must also be given a reasonable degree of discretion in fulfilling their duties. A group, service board, or committee should consult its collective conscience in arriving at its own understanding of the best way to apply this concept.

Sometimes we fear that delegation will mean a loss of control over our services. Together, Concepts One, Two, and Three have been designed to help us maintain responsibility for our service structure without tying our trusted servants’ hands. The Third Concept encourages our groups to focus on their own responsibilities, while assuring that the service structure is given the authority it needs to fulfill other necessary NA services. Our Twelve Concepts do not ask our groups to abdicate their authority, allowing the service structure to do whatever it pleases. The groups, after all, have established the service structure to act on their behalf, at their direction. And when the groups need to exercise final authority in service matters, they are encouraged to do so.

However, in day-to-day matters, the groups have given our service boards and committees the practical authority necessary to do the jobs assigned them.

Delegating authority can be a risky business unless we do so responsibly. To make Concept Three work, other concepts must also be applied consistently. Most importantly, we must give careful attention to the selection of trustworthy trusted servants. We cannot responsibly delegate authority either to those who are fundamentally incapable of administering that authority or to those who are not willing to account fully for their actions. However, if we select our leaders carefully, choosing those who can be trusted to responsibly exercise delegated authority in fulfilling the tasks we’ve given them, we can feel much more comfortable with the concept of delegation.

When we give our trusted servants a job, we must adequately describe to them the job we want done, and we must provide them with the support they need to complete their job. Then, once we’ve given them instructions and support, we must delegate to them the authority necessary to make decisions related to the task they’ve been assigned. When our groups delegate sufficient authority to our service structure, our groups need not be overcome with the demands of making every service decision at every level of service, and our fellowship’s primary purpose can be served to the fullest. With the Third Concept squarely in place, our groups are free to conduct recovery meetings and carry the NA message directly to the addict who still suffers, confident that the service structure they have created has the authority it needs to make the decisions involved in fulfilling its responsibilities.

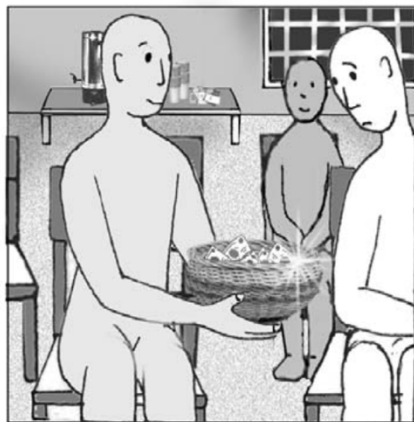
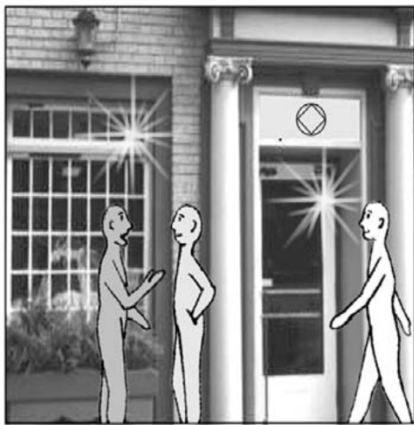
# UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Chili Cookoff and H&I Learning Day	Saturday March 11 <sup>th</sup> @ 1:00pm
Fire Side Meeting (Square Peg, Round Hole)	Saturday March 18 <sup>th</sup> @ 6:00pm
Without Reservations Anniversary Potluck/Meeting	Sunday March 19 <sup>th</sup> @ 12:00pm
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday March 25 <sup>th</sup> @ 10:00am

## Home GROUP

The NA Way – April 2003  
(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



## Holbert Trail – South Mountain



**March 25, 2023** (4<sup>th</sup> Saturday)

### WE MEET:

**WE Meet 8:45 AM**, at Evergreen Park, 5<sup>th</sup> & Country Club in Mesa  
**Carpool & leave 9:00 AM**  
**OR meet at trailhead at 9:45 to start HIKE at 10:00 AM**

### Directions:

Enter South Mountain Park from Central Avenue. Just past the first guard gate, turn left toward the South Mountain Educational Center, and proceed East about 1/4 mile to the marked trailhead.

This is a moderate 4.7 mile Hike with panoramic views of South Mountain Park, and prehistoric petroglyphs.



**Bring:** Newcomer, Water, Lunch, & P.M.A.

Call to let us know to expect you  
 Chuck H. (480) 236-4859

**NA Meeting Included**

*The Wilderness is Open for Sharing!*