



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

April 2023

Narcotics Anonymous 5th Tradition: *Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.*

Tradition Five helps our groups fulfill the fundamental reason for their existence: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. We may do many things in our meetings, but we must never lose sight of our one “primary purpose,” which is to carry the message. The group’s focus on carrying the message is so important to the survival of NA that we call it our primary purpose. That means it is the most important thing we do.

And what is our message? Our message is “that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.” Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. We often see and hear members preaching and teaching, doing comedy routines, dazzling us with their smooth NA talk, pontificating, lecturing, or bragging. As entertaining as that is, we must never lose site of the fact that “when all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.” We try to lead by example, sharing experience, strength and hope instead of advice.

Our challenge is to create an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings. This includes extending a welcome to *every* addict who attends, no matter race, religion, lack of religion, drug of choice, sexual preference, age, socio-economic status, etc. Just remember what it was like when you were a newcomer, and the whole program seemed foreign to you. I imagine you were in some pain, and you probably did not know the language or etiquette of the fellowship. Maybe you were not accustomed to talking about your pain and suffering. How did the group help you to feel safe and comfortable, and how was our message communicated to you? I suggest you think about what worked and what didn’t work for you, and use that as a guide.

“Many meetings are structured to carry the message to our newest members. These new members often need more encouragement to stay, more answers to their questions, more of our love and care. But the newest members are not the only addicts who need the message of recovery. The still-suffering addict with whom we share our hope may be any one of us, regardless of clean time. Tradition Five is not limited to helping newcomers. The message of recovery is for all of us”. (It Works How and Why, p. 163)

I am approaching 33 years of continuous clean time and I can tell you that on many occasions I was the addict in the room that was still suffering. I am so grateful for this program and this Tradition because in every case that I opened up and shared that I was suffering, members of the fellowship showed up and gave me the love, support and hope that I needed.

When I hear a member share that they are still suffering, or see a member who seems to be suffering, I make a point to reach out after the meeting. I do not do cross talk in the meeting, but I will offer a hug, an ear and/or my phone number after the meeting.

There are many distracting influences that can divert us from our primary purpose. For instance, our groups may be tempted to use meeting time to discuss their business and finances or talk about some controversy. As individual members, we can get caught up in socializing with our friends, ignoring another addict who may be in pain and needs our encouragement. Each time our focus is diverted from our primary purpose, the addict seeking recovery loses out. (It Works How and Why, p. 161)

(Continue pg.3)

I've stopped and started this article over and over again trying to think about what to say about the fourth step. There are so many layers which at times may seem overwhelming and even scary. Taking the fourth step will help in ways you won't understand until you've done it. I promise. It's had a profound impact on my recovery and personal development. Be as thorough as possible and trust your Higher Power to guide you.

To date, I've done this step twice. The first was during my last (and failed) attempt at getting clean. My sponsor gave me the writing assignments of listing my resentments, fears and sexual inventory. With reservations, I started to write and what filled the pages was tragedy, more tragedy, pain and pettiness. I held nothing back and 58 pages later, I moved on to step five.

It took me ten years to come back after that run and when I got to the fourth step with my then sponsor, I couldn't do it. I wouldn't do it. I didn't trust him enough to do this step with him. No way. I knew what would come out just as much as I knew I was at a crossroads. I could use this as an excuse to go back out, procrastinate indefinitely or stay. I chose to stay in recovery. I immediately got another sponsor, one I trusted, and kept working the steps.

This last time, my sponsor had me write down my resentments. We met weekly where I'd read them and we'd talk through what the fear was, what my part was and the exact nature for that relationship. I started with superficial ones like so and so cut me off on the freeway and moved to more intense resentments as time went on. As we moved through this step, I felt a tremendous weight being lifted off my soul, almost like taking an hour-long shower to get the dirt off. My mood improved. I gained a freedom from my past. I no longer had to hide and I no longer had to be afraid. By the end of my fourth step, I was completely aware of my exact natures: not good enough, less than, and not worthy. I also learned no one is coming to save me.

By this point, I had a ton of information about who I was and especially about my motivations. They were clear as day thanks to the patterns I saw unfolding. This knowledge was power because for the first time, I had a choice. I could now start doing things differently and expect a different outcome.

Working the fourth step was eye-opening. I had a lot of demons to face but afterwards, I was left with the power of choice and hope. I could change and was not doomed to repeat the past. I felt lighter than I had in years.

Natalie H

Narcotics Anonymous 5th Tradition: *Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.*

The literature suggest that groups would benefit from examining how well they are carrying the message of recovery. Are there addicts our groups are not reaching? How can we make our meetings more accessible? What can we do to make new embers feel more at home? Has the atmosphere of recovery diminished? Would a change in our meeting format strengthen that atmosphere?

I love the connection between the 12th Step and the 5th Tradition. In my own journey I realize that I was trying to carry the message before I even had the message, and many times I was carrying the "mess" instead of the message. I remember the first time I shared my story at a meeting I had a hot 90 days. It was an hour-long meeting. I must have shared for 50 minutes – what I used, how much I used and who my connections were – you see, I didn't know enough about recovery; my life in addiction was all I knew.

But as stated in our 12th Step, "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, *we tried to carry this message to addicts*, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." I thank my HP that I kept coming back, and finally can share a clear message of hope to the addict that still suffers. As I progressed in my Step work, my message changed. It has become more consistent with our primary purpose, and focused on the fact "that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live"

A grateful recovering addict, Roland W.

This is an honest program, so it behooves me to tell you that I am currently working on Step Three, and I have not yet completed all 12 steps. The words that I write lack experience with living in and writing on Step Five. Instead, what I offer here is the fear that I have as I work through my steps.

I am working my steps diligently, have accepted my powerlessness, stayed clean through my newcomer hardships, have hope and faith in my life now in NA, and have found my Higher Power, but I am freaked out about uncovering my wrongs. I know that they exist, but I have spent a lifetime ignoring their presence.

The first part of my life was driven by the idea that “failure” was not allowed. I did everything “perfectly,” and would never admit my true limitations with anyone else. I saw myself in terms of whether I was doing a good job, “using” something to reduce my personal suffering. I would fling about hurting others and myself, ironically quantifying my life in terms of how much of my own suffering I could reduce. This allowed me to ignore my character defects.

This isn’t to say that I won’t easily acknowledge that I am a terrible person. Nope, my self-esteem makes that easy for me. What scares me are the truths of my hurtful behaviors that lie even deeper in my spirit. I have spent a lifetime practicing how to avoid acknowledging these “wrong” (with my addiction at the helm of course), so I have self-protective defenses that are damn good, to say the least. There are still aspects to my life in addiction that I am hiding from full self-awareness now in recovery.

I am still frightened of admitting I am not perfect. In Step Four, I know that I will take a deeper look and find out my authentic self, defects and all. It is truly scary. It is going to take courage to move forward, but with the program behind me and my sponsor as my guide, I am going to push on.

I am going to willingly share these “wrong” with my sponsor. From there, I hope to find a strength in myself and deeper connection with other addicts. All of these are hopes for when I live the fifth step, and I know the truth is that I will probably learn something different, deeper, and purer than I can even imagine. Right now, what I do know with certainty is that I’m scared shitless of these steps, but I am going to do them.

I want the peace I have seen on the faces of experienced members who keep sharing that they have completed the steps. I know that if I want what they have, then I have to do what they do. So, “Screw you, fear!” I am going to walk through these steps honestly and thoroughly with NA at my side.

Stephanie B.

Fifth Concept: *“For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.”*

The Twelve Concepts for Service reads as follows regarding the Fifth Concept: “In defining a single point of decision for each service assignment, we eliminate confusion about who has authority to do what. We also clarify accountability for our services; whoever is given the authority for a particular task will be held accountable for the fulfillment of that task.

Some of the questions your group can ask regarding this Concept follow:

- Does your group assign particular tasks to particular people? Does this help ensure that important jobs actually get done?
 - For example, does your group have a greeter or someone to distribute tickets for a ticket meeting? A coffeemaker? A group secretary?
 - Are these appointed people fulfilling their tasks?
- What happens when more than one person or subcommittee is responsible for the same task?
 - How has this turned out? Strong communication between the assigned people or committees is imperative when this does occur. For example, in H&I, members may chair a meeting one week each

month. In that case, a group coordinator can help ensure they cover all the meetings.

Sometimes as committee chairs, we have to make tough calls. When a committee or group chairperson requests someone do something, or even harder, asks them *not* to do something, it is sometimes to protect the Fellowship from a Tradition violation or other issue. Do those people accept that chairperson’s request? (If you have never faced this issue in service, keep coming back – you will.) Alternatively, rather than accepting that request, is there backlash, gossip and resentment?

This concept tests our leadership, and sometimes, our humility skills. It shows how important it is that we elect trusted servants who possess the right skills to make the sometimes-difficult decisions. Our leaders must also be thick-skinned, because leadership will invite criticism. As one of our former editors of the *NA Way* used to say, “If you stand up, you make a good target.” Service isn’t always easy.

While other people’s behaviors may trigger our response, it is always our responsibility to act appropriately or be prepared to make amends.

-Nancy G.

Pat Cobos-Sloan died March 18, 2023. This remarkable woman started the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship here in Arizona in 1969.

Pat and her then-husband Tony, recently released from the Lexington Kentucky drug program with seven pending felonies, arrived in Arizona. They promptly picked up their “old days and old ways” and began to buy and sell drugs exhausting their friends and family.

Tony’s family’s was finally fed-up. They put a note on their suitcases that said, “We love you, but we can’t stand your behavior. When you choose to change we would love to see you for Christmas, Thanksgiving, or birthdays.” They prequalified what they would do and when. These folks had been taking care of them for 7 or 8 years by this time and they were simply done.

Pat said for that split second “I knew what love was.”

It wasn’t long until the “old addict self” stepped in and said “Great, we are finally away from those crazy people.” The game started all over again and soon they were living in a motel and a narcotics officer came knocking on the door.

His name was Joe Villa, Pat said, “I can remember his name to this day. He said, ‘I just want to talk to you, we haven’t turned off the water, nobody is busting in the windows, I’m not here to arrest you, I just want to talk to you.’ He proceeded to tell me my life’s story and I had no idea how he knew so much about me.”

For a split-second, Pat knew he was telling the truth. He said “You are not bad people, you are sick people. Why don’t you call AA? I don’t know if they will accept you, but why don’t you call?” Pat went to the phone booth and called. She told the man who answered, “I’m not an addict, and he responded, ‘Wait a minute... alcohol is a drug... are you sick and tired of being sick and tired?’”

Pat said, “Oh am I!”

He told her they would send somebody out; it might be in a couple of hours, or a couple of days or it might even be in a couple of weeks, but somebody would come out. “So,” Pat said, “When Tommy V. and another guy came out they just talked to me. The one guy was pure alcoholic but what I remembered most was what he said last. “Some people will tell you what you should have done, some people will tell you what you shouldn’t have done, and we will show you how we did it.”

At 28 years of age, married with children, “I knew I didn’t know what to do so I started following what he did.” John Lancomb was her first sponsor. He was a bank robber who had escaped from Canada and although not a heroin addict he had abused other drugs. Pat and Tony could attend meetings and business meetings, and even go on twelve-step calls but they had to stay silent.

During this time period Mike D. at 4848, a local Alana club, talked to Dr. Don Damstra, the program coordinator, about the St Luke’s facility and the possibility of volunteering and helping out with the drug addicts there. Pat completed 18 months of training and Ellie Schafer, the hospital supervisor, arranged for members of Narcotics Anonymous from southern California to come and talk to Tony and Pat about forming meetings in Arizona. In early 1969 –1970, the growth was slow but within a year there were three or four meetings. Dr Hickock finally had to call the police department and say they couldn’t come on the grounds to arrest the addicts who were congregating for meetings.

The Fountain Hills water feature became the world’s tallest fountain in the middle of the Arizona desert during the time of the NA’s founding in Arizona. Developers slated a purchased cattle ranch between the Verde River and the outskirts of the greater Phoenix area to become a community development. In an effort to hook interest from homebuyers, this fountain shot up 560 feet in the air, and Fountain Hills was born out of the dust of the Sonoran Desert.

Unlike the fountain springing from the dust of the desert, Narcotics Anonymous began from the most unlikely of places and time. In our Fellowship today, Pat is largely unknown. She never craved or wanted any acclaim or attention.

The essence of the “therapeutic value of one addict helping another” continues to resonate and is the fuel we on which we run today. We will miss this vibrant and kindhearted woman who has given so much to our Fellowship. John Muir said, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe”... and so it is with Narcotics Anonymous.

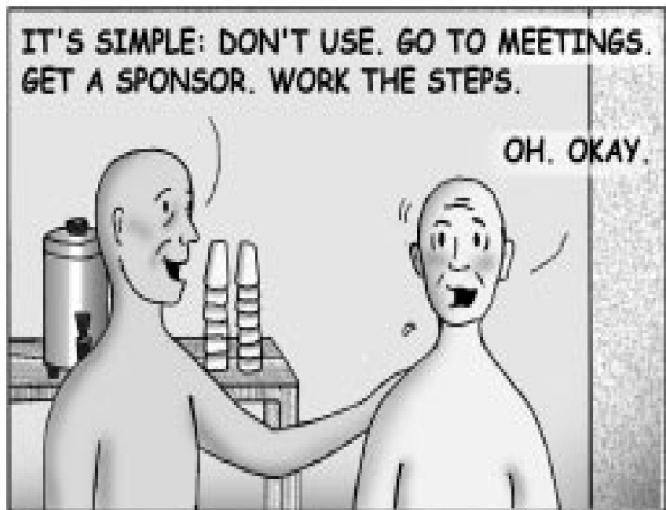
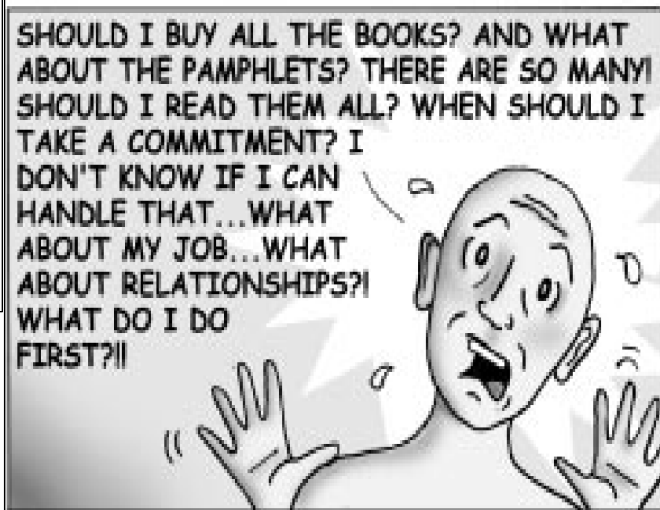
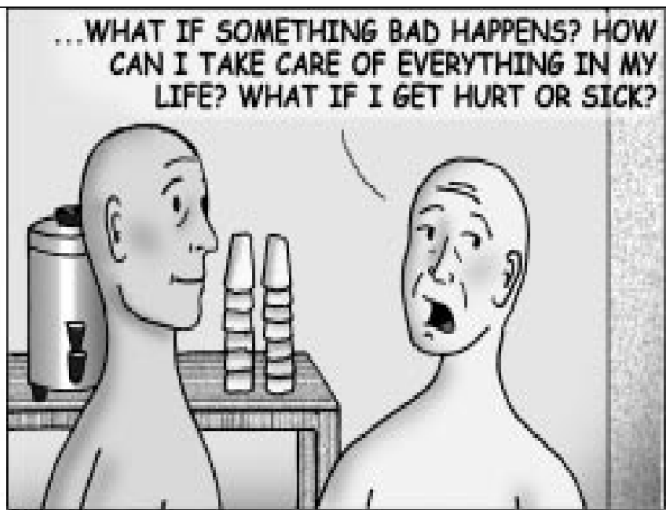
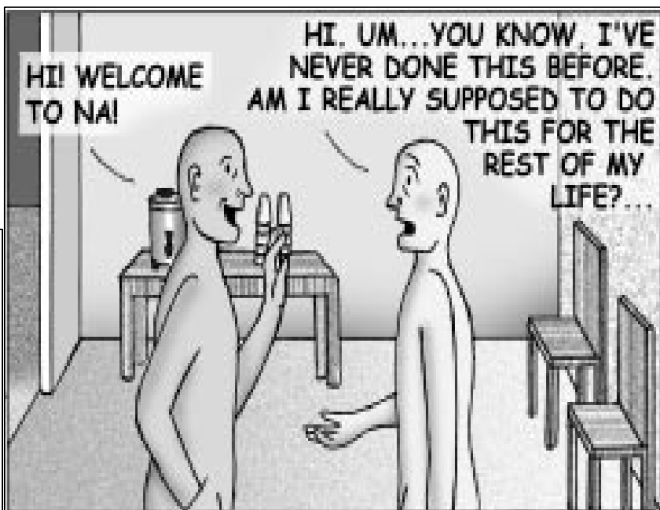
Carol G.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Sedona Campout	Friday - Sunday May 5 th – May 7 th
Coffee with my Sisters <i>Mother's day brunch</i>	Saturday May 13 th @ 10:30am
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday April 22 nd @ 10am
Sponsorship Day Luau	Saturday May 20 th @ 10am
Jump into Summer Luau	Saturday May 20 th @ 3pm
Festival of Recovery Campout	Friday – Sunday May 26 th – May 29 th
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday May 27 th @ 10am

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(Volume 20 Number 4)



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



Name: _____

Date: _____

Drugs of Addiction

T H W P J F N O I T C I D D A S S E C O R P U M
R E C O V E R Y S S E N K A E W O D D Z Z X R Z
I D A A H G G E L S S E L T S E R B D Q A B M K
G A N W T D Q K R G A J K Q Z Z T W I Z N A O P
G N O O E E G R P U H G M I Z P J U G Z A V L I
E G I P M M Q O A I P N F C T P N N N Z U D L N
R E T I L O L W Y L D Z M A C I A O I C J H Y T
S R A A A T I P Y T P E R G S H R I T R I H W E
L V T T T I A E U Z E Y R F Y S C T Y A R O O G
F E I E S O U T S T T A I A T R O A R V A N R R
A Y D V Y N M S I I T A H L E O T T E I M E E I
N S E I R S M N N I E N Y C I S I P C N O S L T
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I E J M G S R U U H X K B H N O S E V S X Y P V
T N U H N E D A X C T I W O A P A T E M Z Q S W
A E Q E S E N C V S P H A L G S N I R K M W E V
C V X N A L C O H O L I C S A N O N Y M O U S L
I I E A L P E N I A C O C H S P N S B P D S O A
N T F B N O I T I R T U N Z R C Y O R J X L F I
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M S S N K G H A R Y N X Y O T Z U I N F T T J D
O S E G Q L C H Z I F H F C H V S A Y Q P I S I
C A N T X H R V W J E M A H S E C A E P A Z V O

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|----------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Honesty | Dignity | Temptation | Integrity | Narcotics Anonymous |
| Alcoholics Anonymous | Emotions | Meetings | Step work | Enabling |
| Gratitude | Denial | Peace | Serenity | Sponsorship |
| Recovery brain | Nutrition | Shame | Guilt | Triggers |
| Relapse | Cravings | Meditation | Recovery | Communication |
| Process addiction | Networking | Assertiveness | Anger | Pcp |
| Restless leg | Nausea | Insomnia | Weakness | Anxiety |
| Depression | Opiate | Marijuana | Crystal meth | Molly |
| Cocaine | Alcohol | Wine | | |