



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

June 2023

The Power of Words

When I first came into the rooms, I was lost. No one was speaking to me but my connections; I had blown through my family; I was living off and on in a crummy motel on 27th Avenue and Indian School and had failed to stay clean after going through treatment and detoxing off methadone.

The simple things people have said to me in the beginning and over the years, once I was able to listen with an open mind and heart, changed my life. Here are a few of the gems.

- *“Brainwashed is better than dead”* – When I came into the rooms, the cliches got on my nerves. I looked around the rooms and thought, “This is kind of cheesy, sort of cult-like, like you’re brainwashing me.” My first sponsor, when I shared my thoughts, said flatly, “Brainwashed is better than dead.” I couldn’t argue with that.

Over the years, I learned how valuable the cliches both in times when I’m in trouble emotionally, or my sponsees are troubled. Although I no longer worry that I’m brainwashed, I heartily agree that, yes, brainwashed *is* better than dead.

- *“What do you think God wants for you?”* – For the first few years of my recovery, I still had a lot of hustle left in me. I had a hard time giving up the old playmates and playgrounds, which is why it took me so long to get clean. My sponsor knew I was still running wild, but she had no advice. She only had six month longer clean than me (normal in those days), so she went me to her sponsor (who ironically is my sponsor today).

For the first time, I got gut-level honest with someone besides my sponsor about how insane my behavior was. As we sat in my car outside the Electrician’s Hall during an NA dance, my grandsponsor listened carefully as I told her what was going on in my life. She was silent for a moment, then in her sweet voice, she simply asked me, “What do you think God wants for you?”

I knew in that instant that if I didn’t change, I wouldn’t receive the benefits of recovery nor be able to achieve my life’s goals I’d begun to develop upon getting clean. Her simple question changed my life.

- *“Do you think if he really wanted to be with you, anything would stand in his way?”* – For years I dated a man in the rooms who would not commit. It was always something, mainly his kids, but ultimately I realized that we were both so stubborn, that a long-standing commitment would have made us both miserable.

Although I still loved him and we remained great friends today, I was very frustrated and unhappy. One day I was talking about the situation with a woman in the rooms who knew him well. She and I weren’t particularly close, but after listening to me she said, “Do you think if he really wanted to be with you, *anything* would stand in his way?” I was speechless, but I knew that she was right. I had to move on. I wrote him a letter and let go, and shortly after, the man I am married to came into my life. Leaving him gave me the space needed for my Higher Power to put the right person in my life.

- *“I’m not going anywhere”* – After the other relationship ended, I became good friends with a man who early on assured me that he was going to marry me. “I’m not marriage material,” was my standard response. After more than three years of pushing him away, I finally kicked him to the curb. He waited a few days, then invited me to dinner. What he said made me realize that I loved him and that I wanted to spend my life with him when he said, “I’m not going anywhere. I’m in love with you, and I’m not going away.”

As he tells it, because I never got a restraining order, so he knew he was “in.” But those simple words to a woman who had so many abandonment issues changed my life.

There were many other instances of powerful words that impacted and even redirected my life, sometimes not when I heard them, but often later, when I needed those words to get through a bad situation or even another day clean.

Nancy G.

The 6th Tradition is very much about setting boundaries to protect groups from problems that commonly arise when organizations collaborate. As a member of NA who happens to work in treatment, I can most definitely see the validity of this Tradition. If we attach the NA name to any other organization, anything that happens in the realm of that organization can directly impact the way NA is viewed in the public eye. While NA does not lend its name or finance any other organization, it is important to note that NA does work in cooperation with other organizations in order to best fulfill our primary purpose and carry the message.

One thing I was taught years ago is that the Steps teach us how to work through our own struggles; the Traditions teach us how to play nice with others. My elders taught me that, just as with the Steps, we can apply the Traditions to many areas of life. In the context of Tradition Six, it teaches me that while money, property, and prestige is great and all, I must be vigilant to know when I might be getting carried away. One is too many and a thousand never enough and this applies to many areas of life, not limited to just drugs. While we strive to achieve an improved quality of life and most certainly, the aforementioned can be a byproduct of the work we do on ourselves. That said, accumulating “stuff” and social acceptability does not equal recovery. My primary purpose is to keep the focus within and continue working to better myself from a spiritual standpoint. It is important to

remember if it is not practical, it is not spiritual. Self-discipline is key.

There are several spiritual principles relevant to the Sixth Tradition. Humility is remembering that NA has one promise: freedom from active addiction. It also means by not giving into the temptation to gain prestige or reputation, we keep our egos in check and are able to keep the focus on fulfilling our primary purpose. Our message is also our identity. Therefore, integrity means we ought not to confuse it with other beliefs or literature.

Our Higher Power guides us in all aspects of recovery, so we demonstrate faith by relying on the power of the NA program. If we approach things straightforward and by setting and upholding boundaries with other organizations, we cultivate harmony. Anonymity and selfless service helps to keep the focus on carrying the message and avoids blurring our message. When we are able to stay within the limits established by Tradition Six, we are able to not only establish bonds with organizations in the community, but also enhance our ability to carry the message to the still sick and suffering addict.

In Loving Service,
Jeremy U.

Sixth Concept: “Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.”

Group conscience is an important concept that binds us together. We use group conscience not only in determining how to hold our meetings; we also use group conscience to work together in our service commitments. As recovering addicts (or maybe it’s just human nature), we tend to be self-centered. We may think we know what is best not only for us, but for our groups and service committees. The Sixth Concept allows us to stop and consider not only ourselves, but also others.

Here’s an example. As I edited a recent newsletter, we began a new feature, Clean-Time Chronicles. This is the experience, strength and hope of one addict. In the interview, our reporter used the names of several treatment centers. Once we edited the article, we sent it to some of our public relations committee members who provided input to ensure we were in keeping with our Traditions and singleness of purpose. This is group conscience in action.

In group conscience, we seek “unanimity,” which means every person involved agrees. Because we often hold strong opinions, we can’t always achieve unanimity. Therefore, we often settle for “consensus,” which means “a general agreement.” In other words, we strive for unanimity (one voice) and often settle for consensus (a general voice). The closer we come to unanimity, the better we feel because we try hard to ensure no one feels left out of the process.

Practically, this means even a simple decision may take a lot of dialogue. We are sometimes people who want to handle things quickly – “Make a decision and move on.” Achieving unanimity is a slower process than settling for consensus. Achieving unanimity requires patience, flexibility and a level of maturity. Our group conscience is a critical component in ensuring NA functions smoothly and with one voice. As it says in our 12 Concepts for NA Service, “We apply the Sixth Concept when we seek to do God’s will, not our own, and to serve others, not ourselves, in our service decisions.”

Nancy G

“When we were beaten we became willing.” What a great statement and oh, so true, for this addict. The one nice part about getting clean at a later age (51) is after getting your ass kicked for the long haul, it doesn’t take as much to make a small improvement in your life look monumental.

I didn’t want to get clean to have a spiritual awakening or work the steps. I just wanted to stop going to jail on a regular basis. So, for me, staying clean and having a real place to call home, not somebody’s couch, and regular food to eat was a major improvement in my life. That was enough for me to be diligent in my meeting attendance, to avoid the old playgrounds and playthings, and cultivate a support group that I could call anytime and not feel like I was bothering them, even though in some cases I probably was.

When I got to this step I was aware I had a defect of character or two but with the help of my sponsor I learned about a few more that needed to be addressed. When we discussed unrealistic expectations, it was a real eye-opener for me.

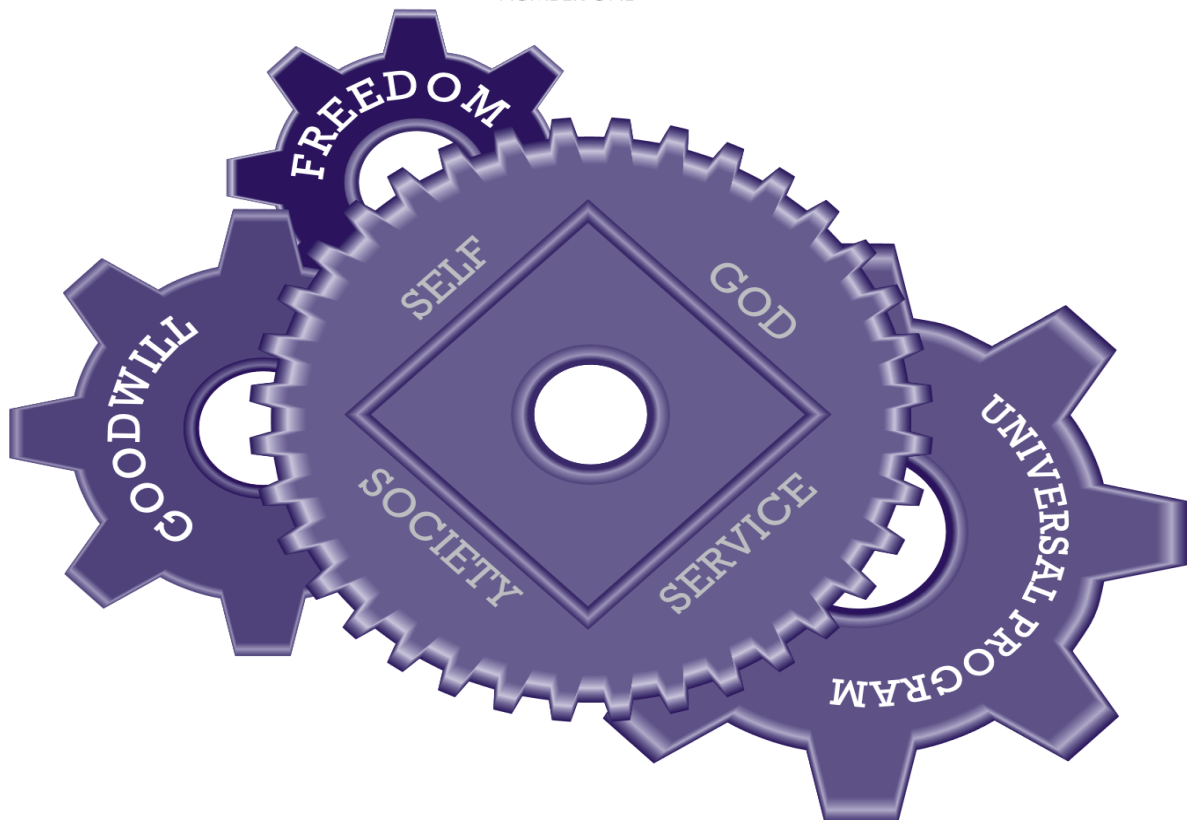
The thought that I placed unrealistic expectations on myself left me dumbstruck. I was always told in my youth to shoot high, aim for the moon, you can be anything you want to be etc. Then not being able to meet those expectations left me feeling small, useless. Changing my goals to more realistic ones and being willing to put in the work to obtain them took some of that burden off me.

Sometimes I still place unrealistic expectations on myself, but I do it a lot less and I recognize them much earlier. That is progress for me and a reminder that this is a program of progress not perfection. I do the best that I can at this particular moment in time and if that’s not good enough that’s just the way it is.

Finally, if you want to set unrealistic expectations for yourself, take up golf. Believe me, you’ll become very familiar with this concept if you take it seriously. Don’t let it ruin your enjoyment of the game (like I am prone to do).

Tom T.

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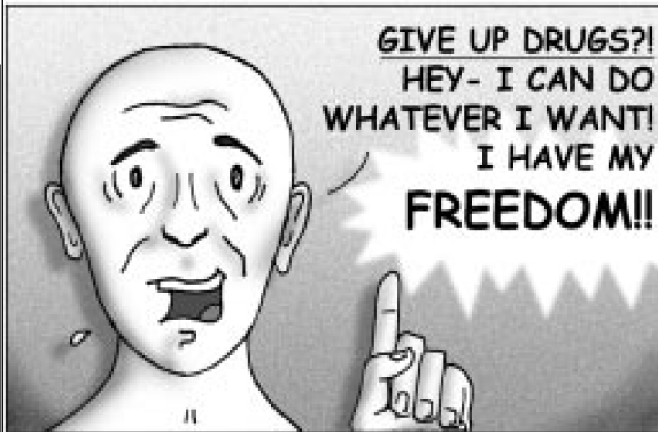
UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Kick Ball	Saturday June 24 th @ 6:30pm
Salt River Rafting + Meeting	Sunday June 18 th @ 8am
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Sunday June 24 th @ 10:15am
ARCNA Sponsor Sponsee Lunch	Sunday June 24 th @ 12:00pm
Mt Lemmon Bash	Friday - Monday June 30 th – July 2nd

Home GROUP

The NA Way – January 2004
(Volume 21 Number 1)



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:

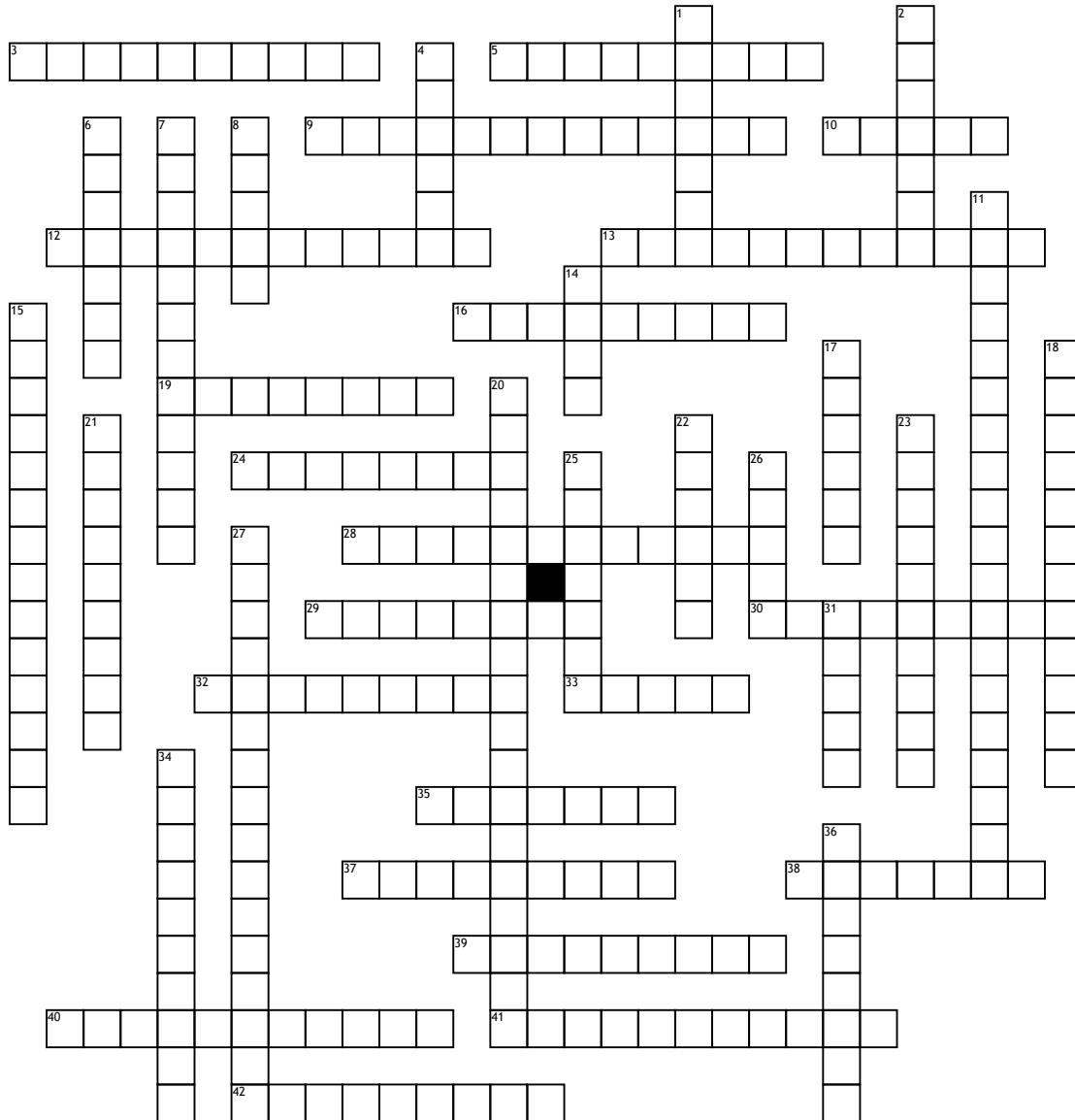
Narcotics Anonymous Prison Coordinator
PO Box 5264
Mesa, AZ 85221



Name: _____

Date: _____

Narcotics Anonymous



Across

- 3. PBP
- 5. Not
- 9. Not the same
- 10. Dirty
- 12. Alternative
- 13. Stupid
- 16. Cunning enemy
- 19. Never enough
- 24. In every meeting
- 28. Don't be specific
- 29. Read me/Dont eat me
- 30. Mind altering
- 32. 129
- 33. See no evil

35. Snagols

- 37. Foundation
 - 38. Don't fall
 - 39. Charity
 - 40. Your choice
 - 41. Different 4 pee
 - 42. White flag
- ## Down
- 1. Incurable
 - 2. Braveheart
 - 4. Hear no evil
 - 6. Here's a nickel
 - 7. You should have read it
 - 8. Life
 - 11. Adapted from

14. Waves

- 15. It works
- 17. We do not
- 18. Before
- 20. We welcome you to
- 21. 29
- 22. Requirement
- 23. 8+4=
- 25. PERIOD
- 26. Foot 123
- 27. It's magical
- 31. Blow away the dust
- 34. After hours
- 36. 5th word