



# THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

April 2024

## Step Four — “We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”

If you have been in (or even just “around”) the program of Narcotics Anonymous for any length of time, you have probably seen evidence that it works. For me, and probably for just about anyone with quality recovery, recovery doesn’t happen by meeting attendance alone. Only after I started doing the footwork, notably working the steps, did the process begin to show results. That’s when my life began changing for the better. It is said that the steps are in order for a reason, so completing them requires doing the fourth. I have seen many addicts only do the first three over and over, often with relapses in between, out of fear of this step. I get that, because it is part of my story as well. Too many addicts seeking recovery never move on to the “dreaded” fourth step, and therefore never get to experience the true benefits of the program.

I was at a large speaker meeting years ago, and there was a lot of clean time in that room. The speaker was talking about the fourth step, and she asked who in the audience had worked a fourth step. Many hands went up. She followed with “How many of you enjoyed it?”. Very few hands remained raised. But when she asked how many of us were glad that we did, the hands quickly went back up. I really related to this train of thought because I balked at this step for many weeks before finally doing my first inventory. But if I had not gone through with it, not only would I not have completed the rest of the steps, I probably would not be here. And I would not have experienced the relief that ensued because of working this part of the process. My recovery would not be anything like it is today, and I am forever grateful for the life I have thanks to the program of Narcotics Anonymous. With hindsight, I can see how integral this step is.

Before coming to Narcotics Anonymous and doing my step work, I did not realize how little I knew about myself. I did not have much of a relationship with myself, and was quite unaware of the denial I was in about how all the internal conflict and turmoil I was in. So much inside of me was buried very deep, and covered up with drugs, behaviors, and attitudes. Then fourth step gave me the opportunity to look at myself and see what was going on inside. I hear a lot of people talk about their fourth step as a list of harms they had done. That was what I covered in the 8<sup>th</sup> step. I believe that this step is really about the emotions and the denial related to things that I did or that happened to me, and how I perceived myself. I had very low self-esteem, and really loathed myself! My sponsor had me do 4 sections for my inventory: a resentment list, a sexual inventory, a fears list, and my assets. An important aspect of this inventory was that I had to find my part in these things.

I have also heard that there is a main spiritual principle behind each step; in the case of the 4<sup>th</sup>, it is courage. It does take courage for most of us to go through this process, because I had to face things about me I did not want to deal with. However, in order to recover, doing this as honestly and as thoroughly as possible was indispensable. Thanks to this step, I got to take a look at feelings and self-image.

I had so many resentments and was consumed by guilt and shame, that were now exposed for me to examine. I was confronted by my unhealthy behaviors and my tendency to be in toxic relationships. I found out that I was driven by many different forms of fears and insecurities, most of which now seem very unfounded. These drove my life and fueled my addiction. I could also really see how I avoided accountability. Today, thanks to the steps, with some honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, I can see my part in just about anything that happens in my life and try to change the cycles of unhealthy thoughts and behaviors. I find that the asset list is a must, because when doing an inventory, we must take into account everything. There is a lot of good in all of us; just because we are messed up and did bad things does not make us bad people.

The fourth step is not meant to demoralize us. It is supposed to show the addict not only what needs work and what should be discarded, but also reveal assets that need to be kept and developed. Because this inventory might leave us somewhat discouraged, it is recommended that I promptly move on to step 5. The 4<sup>th</sup> step was one of the biggest turning points for me, not just for my program, but for my life. When I was done, I felt like a huge weight was lifted. I began understanding myself so much better, and finally started to feel free. That way I was able to work on the subsequent steps, where I get to work on the inside stuff and get better. The program works if you work it. The lie is dead: we do recover!

*Marc C.*

**4<sup>th</sup> Concept:** “Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.”

In last month’s newsletter in the Third Concept, we discussed leadership skills we should look for in our trusted servants. Taking leadership a step farther in the Fourth Concept, let’s see what our *Twelve Concepts for Service in NA* booklet has to say about effective leadership.

**On rotation of leadership**

“Any NA member can be a leader, and every NA member has the right to serve the fellowship.

Effective NA leadership knows not only how to serve, but when it will serve best to step aside and allow others to take over. An entrenched bureaucracy inhibits our fellowship’s growth, while a regular influx of new leadership, balanced by continuity, inspires NA growth. The effective leader also knows that, in order to maintain the distinction in service between principles and personalities, it is important to observe the practice of rotation.”

**On specific skills needed for positions**

“In some positions, trusted servants need specific skills in order to act as effective leaders. The ability to communicate well can help our trusted servants share information and ideas, both in committee work and in reporting to those they serve. Organizational skills help trusted servants keep small service responsibilities simple and make straightforward even the fulfillment of complex tasks. Leaders capable of discerning

where today’s actions will take us, and of offering us the guidance we need to prepare for the demands of tomorrow, serve Narcotics Anonymous well. Certain educational, business, personal, and service experiences may suit a recovering addict more to one type of service commitment than another. We do ourselves, our fellowship, and our trusted servants a disservice when we ask our members to perform tasks they are incapable of fulfilling.”

Our Concepts help guide us in choosing the best people for positions. Unfortunately, we have fewer and fewer people willing to serve, it seems. Why is that? Our sponsors in early recovery (old time sponsors, many who are gone now), usually would not sponsor those who refused to serve. Are we encouraging those we sponsor and other newcomers to step into service?

Nothing builds self-esteem like being part of a service committee, whether it is holding a NA speaker meeting and dance or running kids’ games at a fellowship gathering. Your first service position, maybe as the coffee at your first home group, will remain forever in your heart.

We need more members to serve. If you don’t know where you’d fit, go to a few committee meetings and observe. You may find your unique talents will fit exactly in one committee or service effort or another.

*Nancy G*

**(More on Concept 4 continued in next article)**

**More on Concept 4**

*Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.*

What is leadership, and why is it so important that we consider a trusted servant’s leadership capabilities before we vote them into a position as a trusted servant?

I know, you’re probably thinking, “That’s our only candidate!” No matter whom I talk to in service to NA or where they live, they all say the same thing: “We’re struggling to get members to take service positions.” However, choosing a person to be a trusted servant when they lack leadership skills can be detrimental to not only your home group, area, or region, but to NA as a whole.

**What are leadership skills?**

Let’s review some leadership skills. A Google search will reveal a number, but let’s look at five that may apply in NA.

§ **Creativity** – Sometimes things happen. Bank account funds go missing, venues refuse to renew contracts, accidents happen, or NA receives some negative publicity. Our leaders must quickly and creatively meet all these types of challenges.

§ **Patience** – Leaders in NA do not “govern,” they seek consensus, which is not always easy to achieve because we are a divergent group of people. Consensus means that all in the group agree with the decision. In some consensus matters, some may say, “I don’t necessarily agree, but I won’t oppose you moving forward.” We can only achieve consensus through skilled leaders who take the time to explore all voices, including alternative opinions. As I learned when I worked on the World Service Literature Committee in the early 1990s, “We strive for unanimity (everyone agrees); we settle for consensus.”

§ **Decision-making abilities** – Sometimes our trusted servants must make difficult decisions. As my dad would have said, “It’s time to fish or cut bait.” We may have all worked for bosses who could not make decisions, and things that should move smoothly post-decision never happen. Failing to make important decisions can lead to bigger problems than the ones our leaders are trying to solve. Leadership includes the ability to decide. **(Continued pg. 3)**

§ **Relationship skills** – Trusted servants should be not just skilled verbal communicators (and sometimes in writing), but they should also be solid listeners. This often requires patience, because many times people want to be heard and heard again when they don't agree with the direction the group takes. This is where "principles before personalities" really comes in. We often work on committees with people we don't know, or perhaps even don't like. Many times, once we've worked together in service, we become friends, or at least figure out how to support one another.

§ **Critical thinking skills** – Critical thinkers are able to review the details, evaluate facts from fiction, and narrow down the facts so that all can understand the problem and the proposed solution. A critical thinker must be objective and be able to evaluate the information presented prior to forming a decision.

### When Is it Better to Leave a Service Position Unfilled?

Sometimes it is better to leave a service opening unfilled rather than fill it with someone without the appropriate leadership skills for that position. For example, you don't want a person as a hospitals & institutions' spokesperson who has a resentment toward law enforcement or the department of corrections, for whatever reason. An ability to put personal and even petty resentments aside is a critical characteristic of leadership. Lacking that, the person who insists on reliving those resentments can do more harm than good to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

Another example is that you probably don't want a regional treasurer who has no experience in accounting or accounting software. Are accounting skills leadership skills? They become so when your regional treasurer must handle credit card transactions that reject and must talk to a member or your credit card processing service provider, or solve financial problems that impact our membership, for example.

What do you do when you don't support a potential trusted servant? A solution could be to frankly discuss your concerns with that person. That person may be willing to accept mentorship as they grow in the position.

These are my opinions born out of years of service.

These are just some of the critical skills needed for effective leadership. I'm sure you can think of more.

Nancy G



**Home Sweet Home**  
Meeting of Narcotics Anonymous  
**Spring Fling Picnic**  
Saturday April 6th, 2024 11:00 am to 6:30pm  
at Daley Park 1625 S. College Ave. Tempe, AZ  
Dummy's meeting at 9:30am under tree

**All welcome**  
Free Hotdogs & Hamburgers  
Pot Luck - Bring Your Favorite Side Dish  
Speaker Meetings at Noon and 5:30pm  
**40th Anniversary Celebration 3pm**  
Fun Family Activities Volleyball, Piñata, Frisbee  
Spread the word! Bring a Newcomer  
Recovery Houses Welcome  
For more information: Wayne K. 902-995-6679

## **TGIF** **40 Year Homegroup** **Celebration**

Help us celebrate our homegroup with a  
potluck and fellowship  
April 20th 3pm-6pm  
2310 N. 56th St. Phx



Please bring yourself, food, and a newcomer!

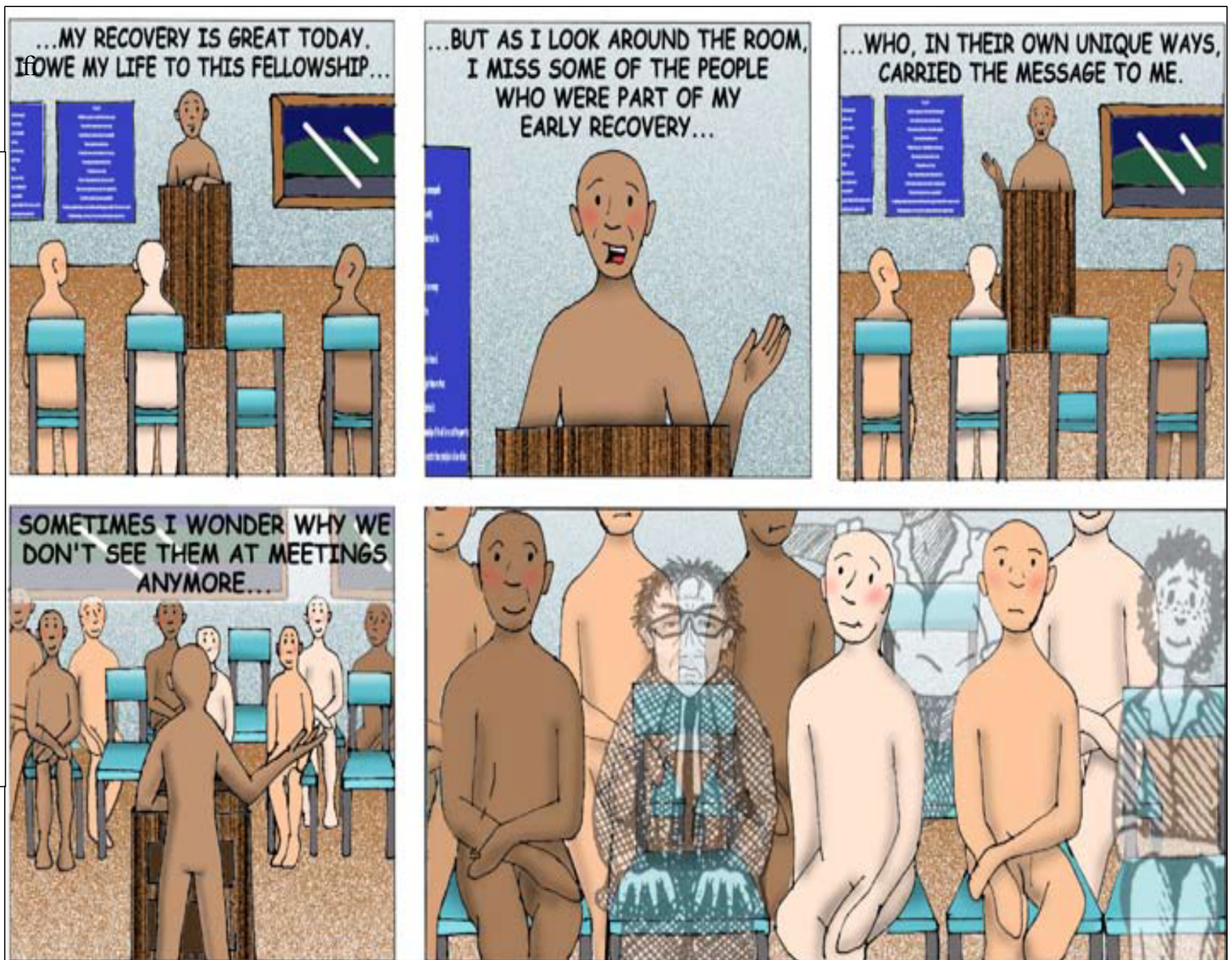
**Potluck starts at 3 pm**  
**Speaker starts at 4 pm**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Game Group – Ray of Hope	Saturday, April 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th 2-4pm
Spring Fling	Saturday, April 6th
TGIF 40 Year Homegroup Celebration	Saturday, April 20 <sup>th</sup> 3pm-6pm
The Spring Soiree ARCNA Fundraiser	Saturday, April 27th 4pm-9pm
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday, April 27th 9:00am

The NA Way – October 2006  
(Volume 23 Number 4)



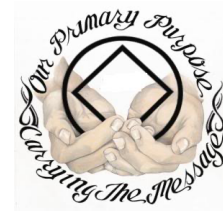
# Sponsorship Behind the Walls

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

# GAME GROUP

**SATURDAYS  
2PM-4PM**

**JOIN US FOR  
FELLOWSHIP  
&  
BOARD GAMES!**



**MARICOPA LIBRARY & CULTURAL CENTER**

**18160 N MAYA ANGELOU DR  
MARICOPA, AZ 85139**