



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

July 2024

For Anyone inside AZ Dept of Corrections: The NA Basic Text Audio Book is available in English & Spanish on the tablets statewide!

From Behind the Walls: Reflections

I stand in front of a mirror, staring at a face I recognize. Green eyes, dark hair with streaks of grey. A few wrinkles have formed over the years - signs of happiness and hardship, loss and grief. I can see through his skin, remnants of mask he once wore. A tear slowly runs from one eye, follows the crease of his nose, finally leaving a taste of salt on his lips. Not a tear of sadness, nor happiness, more one of remembrance. He remembers his daughters' laughter, their voices calling out to him in the dark, their small tender hands placed in his. He remembers family parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. He remembers friends, barbecues, movies and game nights. He remembers a career he enjoyed, a house and parks he played at with his daughters. He remembers a life left behind. Warmth. Laughter. Love. A future.

Then came addiction, a time when he saw a stranger's reflection in the mirror. He remembers the fear he felt waiting for the man looking back at him to make a gesture not his own. His demons. He watched as his life fell apart, his world turned to ash as he set fire to everything around him. He chose isolation. He watched darkness set in. He thought himself alone.

Hope came in the form of recovery. Layers of masks crumbled away exposing the scars, both seen and unseen. In time, they too began to heal and fade. No longer was he the reflection of his addiction. He started to rebuild his life, brick by brick.

As he began to come together, he was yanked away, thrown into prison for past crimes. Crying out in despair, he wanted his life back. He wanted, needed to be reunited with his daughters. Within these prison walls he will not let them win. He will not succumb to the label of felon. Inmate. Prisoner. Slave. He continues his recovery. Soon he will work towards being reunited with his daughters. One day they will truly know him. His laughter, forgiveness, acceptance, his open-mindedness. They will know his love. He writes these articles, short stories and soon novels following his dreams, propelled by God's love. He is a Phoenix born from the ashes of his past.

I stand in front of a mirror, I see a face I recognize. The man reflected works the steps, he goes to meetings, he writes for others, sharing these pieces of him. His soul. One day he will be released from this prison, you may get a chance to meet him. If you truly get to know him, you might be able to feel his love, hear his laughter. Know that the day will come and he will be happy, joyous and free. I am an addict.

My name is Todd O.

7th Tradition: *Every NA group should be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*

The Seventh Tradition seems like an easy one. It states that we are self-supporting through our own contributions. This means we don't accept money or other items of monetary value from treatment centers, doctors, hospitals, governments, or any person or organization, no matter how well-meaning or how badly they want to see us succeed. Since the early days of 12-Step programs, groups saw that allowing outside contributions could influence us and prevent us from being accountable only to our membership.

To honor the Seventh Tradition, we pass the basket and hold fundraisers designed to help us carry the message. That seems simple enough. What about being self-supporting in our own lives? How do we practice the Seventh Tradition in our lives?

I have made the mistake of pushing my sponsees too hard in this area, perhaps. Our *Basic Text* tells us we become "productive members of society," and to many of us, that entails working for a living. There are several reasons we may urge newcomers to becoming self-supporting early in their recovery. When we used, we were takers. Perhaps we took from our families and certainly from society if we caused harm and experienced legal and medical interventions. In NA, members urge us to "give back," and having a job and contributing to society may be part of our

recovery. There are some in our fellowship, however, who simply cannot contribute monetarily.

Not every member is fortunate in the career arena. Some of have disabilities and cannot work more than a few hours a week, if at all. Some of us have a criminal past, which may preclude us from returning to a career we had before we became addicted. Others have no job skills and must learn a trade or go to school to forge a career. Going to school today is not cheap and students are often broke.

At different times in our recovery, we may be able to contribute financially more than at others. What if we find ourselves unable to contribute? We can contribute in other ways – by taking a phone-line shift, by being of service in other ways, or simply by admitting that, once we can, we will contribute again.

It's not our job to judge who contributes and who doesn't, although sometimes we do. If we see you stroll in with a \$5 Starbucks and skip the basket, we may judge (just being real). The Seventh Tradition is a powerful statement in our rooms. We are self-supporting so that outside influences cannot corrupt or cause us to sway from our primary purpose. In our own lives, self-support is critical to self-esteem.

By the time we get to Step 7, we are at least aware of what character defects are. If we can't identify our own we can probably make lists for everyone else. One thing that was apparent to me when I first arrived at this step is that I cannot fix myself.

I heard it shared in meetings that if I could fix myself, I wouldn't have ended up in Narcotics Anonymous. This is so true. When I first admitted that to myself, that I cannot, on my own, change myself the initial feeling was "I am hopeless." Then with the help of the fellowship and our message I realized I needed help. That is such a simple concept that I need help. I did start to notice that unless a defect really had me in the corner and embarrassed me, I would call it a "survival skill." Those were not easy to let go. I thought they made me who I was.

I was taught early on that the way to practice this step is not to work on my defects but to put my assets and strengths into action. This is how I started living this step. Over time, I have realized that the main thing that was missing in my first 7th step was humility.

The *Basic Text* says that, "To be truly humble is to accept and honestly try to be ourselves." This did not happen overnight for me. It took multiple rounds of the full 12 steps for me to know honestly, who I was, so that I could be that person. When I got a glimpse of who Patte T. was using my "survival skills" started to cause me spiritual and emotional pain.

I shared in meetings, I exposed my defects, I trusted that people in the program would still accept me. Most importantly, I trusted the God of my understanding and I asked for help. Today I understand humility to be "Not thinking less of myself but thinking of myself less."

This thought process turns me to service and toward others, and draws me into a deeper relationship with my Higher Power. Character defects don't sit well with my spirit anymore. The miracle of recovery has taken hold. Thank you, Narcotics Anonymous.

Patte T

7th Tradition: *Every NA group should be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*

This month, I'm pleased to print this piece from Tom M. of Hawaii. He discusses a historical view of NA finances and the importance of supporting NA World Services in this difficult time.

Hello everyone, this pandemic and the effect on our economy has got me thinking. As some of us are aware our fellowship services has been hit hard. With no face to face meetings and the switch to virtual meetings there has been very little income to support our services structure.

Back in 1985 I wrote a piece about our seventh tradition when I was on the WSC Board of Trustees. That's when the trustees were supposed to be the custodians of our traditions. Each of us were supposed to write articles on the traditions, in some cases they became Trustee bulletins. My piece never reached that level. But some of the things I wrote about are pertinent today. It was a sort of a dire warning of our future if we continued down the path we were on.

Most of us know our history and its humble beginnings, our slow growth from the 50's to the late 70's. A time when no one believed in us or trusted us, a time we had no money to do anything. There was so much to do to help grow our fellowship, but no money and no organized structure to plan or deliver the services that were so needed.

As we started to grow, money started to trickle in through the basket and we had what we called a fund flow that was supposed to work its way through the service structure. Of course, our needs were greater than what was being contributed in the basket.

Then the *Basic Text* was published, and we started to see real money coming in. We had conventions that generated huge profits and all sorts of fundraisers at the area and regional levels. All this was in timing with society opening to the fact that there was a big drug problem. Addiction was now seen as a treatable disease and as a result insurance companies began paying for treatment and treatment centers were opening all over the world. Our small fellowship was being flooded with newcomers. It was a great and exciting time.

We had developed from a North American fellowship to a worldwide fellowship in record time. Fellowship development and translations were a top priority. The need for more recovery material and fellowship services was being met. Our humble beginnings and the service commitments of thousands of members from around the world created what we have today.

The piece I wrote was a warning that we were heading down a perilous path. We had become dependent on funds generated by our literature sales and our events. It was a natural development and no doubt it had offered us the ability to expand as fast as we did. But the price was our dependence and our move away from our responsibility to be self-supporting through our own contributions. The concept of the seventh tradition is simple: We reach in our pockets and pay for what we want. We support what we created to serve our fellowship and carry the message to the still suffering addict.

One of the biggest thorns in the side of our fellowship has been the affordability of our literature. We created services at the WSC and the WSO that are dependent on literature sales. We voted on projects and essential services with budgets that only the literature sale can meet.

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We're starting a new column, a Q&A on different scenarios on the Steps, Traditions, or Concepts. These are also good topic discussion questions at your meetings. On this first question (below), we put out a Facebook query and received over forty answers. Here are some of them.

Q. Is a text apology a "direct amends"?

- A. "If you harmed someone in a public forum (online or otherwise), the amends should also be made in public. Otherwise, amends should be made privately."
- A. "Ask your sponsor and follow their direction."
- A. "Face to face."
- A. "I would say 'no.'"
- A. "Depends. I accepted it from one I don't care to speak to again. If it's someone you have a relationship with that's different. But when one or both people are emotionally invested, that changes things."
- A. "It would go with me, but I understand being able to rationalize it, too."
- A. "I'd say it's not a direct amends. There are some people I'm better off not speaking to and would prefer a text from. But not in most situations."
- A. "When I ask if someone's willing to hear an amends, I ask if they'd like it in person, on a call, or in writing."
- A. "It's better than no amends at all. You waded into the waters, at least."
- A. "No. But how about this. Say two people go at each other fairly good calling each other names on social media. Should the amends also be made on social media? I believe 'Yes.'"
- A. "Not even close unless face-to-face would be dangerous or harmful to either party."
- A. "Shortcut."
- A. "I think a text is a good start. But if both parties are serious about repairing the relationship, face to face or, at the very least, a phone conversation."
- A. "An amends is simply 'I'm sorry I hurt you, how can I right my wrong?' (With an honest attempt at changed behavior), it's then up to the receiver to specify the amends required. (This would only work with the living and those who phone number you have.)"
- A. Text message is the way to avoid conversation. And if you expect a quick response and don't get it, it is a setup for resentment. On a personal level, the best practices are in person or by phone, listening to the person on the other end of the conversation.



And now for the humorous ones!

- A. "Listen, if you're married to the guy, you just have to accept it!"
- A. "Depends on if you use the right emojis."
- A. "When I do it, definitely 'Yes'"

(Continued from pg. 2) : 7th Tradition

Within our own fellowship we fight over protecting our fellowships intellectual property. I believe in part this is one of the side effects of this dependence. There might be a bright side to this worldwide pandemic, to quote: "Sometimes God will do for us what cannot do for ourselves."

The world is changing in ways we have yet to see, and that includes our NA world and it includes our World Services and our World Service office. Literature orders are barely trickling in, half the staff has been furloughed and more cuts will be coming as the funds are depleted. This means the many translation projects will be put on hold indefinitely.

Hundreds of H&I correspondence emails and letters pile up unanswered. (I know of one staff member who is being paid half time that put in 12 straight hours answering them) I could go on and on the impact it is having on our fellowship.

So, what is my point? I think this is an opportunity to take back and fulfill our responsibility to be truly self-supporting through our own contributions. To take control of the purse strings of our fellowship, produce our literature at cost and do what we are capable of doing. To date our direct contributions have ranged from 9 to 11 percent of our budgets, and most of

that has come from the profits from large regional conventions.

I did some simple math. If I have \$20.00 USD taken out of my checking account, credit card or PayPal each month, \$240.00 a year and if 50,000 members were to do the same that would generate \$12 million, or whatever one felt they could contribute on a monthly basis, it would be enough money to fund our world services and produce our literature at cost.

The reason I think it is important to do this as an automatic contribution each month rather than one-time contribution is it will help to give stability to our world services.

After all has been said and done, there is usually more said than done. This is what I am doing, and I hope others will follow. Please feel free to share this if you believe what I am saying is true.

Tom M., Hawaii

Interested in contributing to NA World Services? Visit the following link.

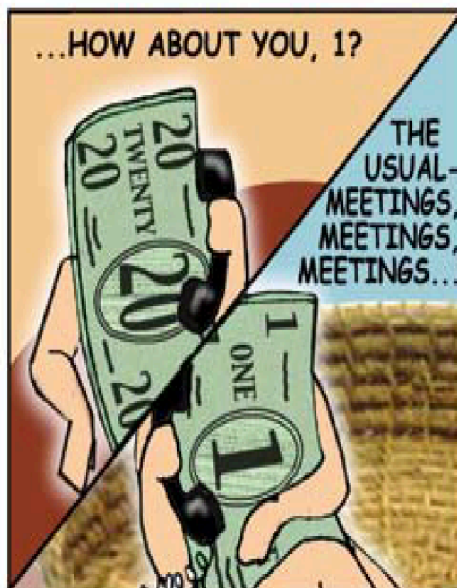
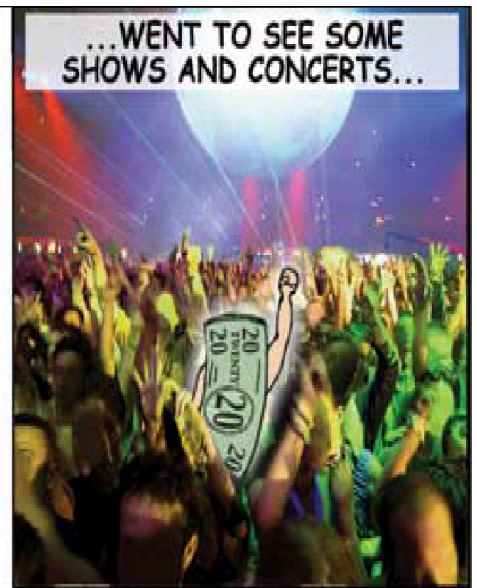
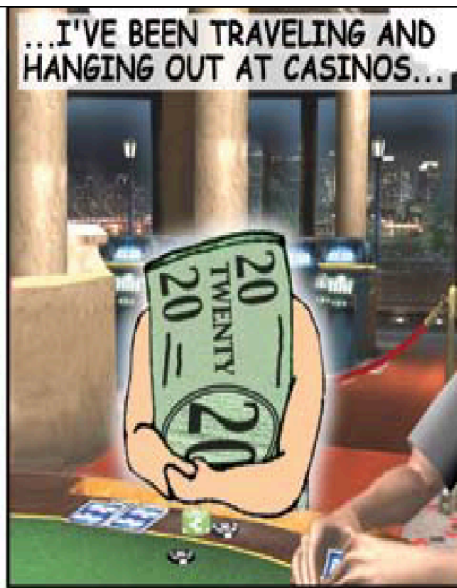
<https://www.na.org/?ID=contribute-now>

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Game Group – Ray of Hope	Saturday, July 6 th , 13 th , 20 th , 27 th 2-4pm
Festival of Hope	Friday July 5 th – Sunday July 7 th
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday July 27 th 9:45am
Summer Speaker Jam	Saturday July 20 th 12pm-4pm
Bartlett Lake BBQ	Saturday July 20 th 10am-2pm

The NA Way – April 2007
(Volume 24 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

GAME GROUP

**SATURDAYS
2PM-4PM**

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



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