



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

October 2024

Principles Before Personality

How many times have we heard the statement “Principals before Personalities”? The answer is at every meeting we have ever attended. When I first heard “principals before personalities”, I am sure I didn’t understand the importance of this statement. It is safe to say I didn’t understand the importance of much of what is included in the literature. But it seems that the longer I am involved in NA, the more I appreciate the wisdom of the individuals who wrote our literature. It is obvious that they were able to reflect and articulate issues that could be a speed bump on our road of recovery.

When I first came to NA, the anonymity was difficult for me. My ego told me that everyone needed to know who I was and what I had accomplished in my life not just that I was an addict. I know now that I was trying to separate myself so I could believe that I was different or special. Thank God that I have now learned that I am the same as every other addict. We may not have taken the same road to get here but we have all suffered and we all struggle from the same potentially fatal disease, and we need each other to survive.

It is easy to forget how it felt to walk in the doors of NA for the first time. I was scared, nervous and desperate. I would do anything to feel better and be better. However, once the urge to use was lifted and life started to improve, it seems that I became more comfortable in NA and my recovery became a comfortable routine. I am very fortunate that “more will be revealed” is true. No matter how much time I spend in recovery, my addiction and my character defects creep into my life. I am sure this is true for a lot of us.

After we read the Traditions, we read the text that follows which includes this statement T **“Understanding these Traditions comes slowly over a period of time. We pick up information as we talk to members and visit various groups. It usually isn’t until we get involved with service that someone points out that – personal recovery depends on NA unity and that unity depends on how well we follow our Traditions...they are truly the ties that bind us together and it is only through understanding and application that they work”**. That is a lot to digest which is why it comes slowly over a period of time.

Tradition 5 states “Every NA group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict that still suffers”. However, we are all human and imperfect and sometimes we forget our primary purpose because we are focused on winning an argument or distracted by someone who makes us uncomfortable. But we can’t afford to get distracted because if we miss the opportunity to carry the message to an addict, it could be fatal.

I have learned so much and I am proud of my service in NA however more has recently been revealed to me. There are so many good people involved in service who come from different backgrounds and bring different skills to the table and unfortunately, we all have egos. Egos really like to be heard and it is easy to let the ego take over and suddenly we are letting personalities override our principals. We forget that our primary purpose is helping the addict that still suffers. Instead, we get caught up in our differences, develop resentments and the group is unable to accomplish anything. The only thing that matters is helping the addict who still suffers and working together to find a way to accomplish that goal. When I remind myself of this, personalities are no longer important.

Being of service is a very rewarding experience. It is a way to meet a lot of new people and to give back a little of what was freely given to me. I look forward to many more years of service in NA and learning what is “still to be revealed”.

Amanda K



Arizona Region of Narcotics Anonymous®



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1. Complete the CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE form on the right
2. Make a check payable to Northern Arizona Convention of Narcotics Anonymous for the total amount
3. Put it in an envelope
4. Mail it to: NACONA, PO BOX 10324, Prescott AZ, 86304
5. Call Little America Hotel to reserve your room (info on the back)
6. Call a committee member for updates on entertainment, opportunities to be of service, or just to say hello

TECH SAAYV

1. Scan the QR code below or go to naticuson.org
2. Complete the registration form and pay online
3. Sign up to receive emails and stay in the loop
4. Book your hotel room at Little America (info on the back)



CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE

		HOW MUCH	HOW MANY	TOTAL \$\$\$
REGISTRATION	Not afraid of commitments Commonly known as "pre-registration", commit early and save money. Discount ends on Sept. 15th, 2024, so mail in or register online.	\$45 ea.	\$	
	Fly by the seat of my pants For those of us who aren't good at planning or are committed to living in the moment, this option is for you.	\$55 ea.	\$	
GET YOUR GRUB ON	New York Striploin 10 oz. New York Strip Steak With Bordelaise Sauce, served with Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Honey Roasted Baby Carrots	\$65 ea.	\$	
	Arizona Pistachio Chicken Pistachio Encrusted Chicken Breast topped with Tequila Lime Sauce, served with Wild Rice Medley and Seasonal Vegetables	\$55 ea.	\$	
	Parmesan Encrusted Halibut Herb Roasted Fingerling Potatoes and Roasted Baby Carrots	\$65 ea.	\$	
	Vegetarian Scampi Garlic Garlic, Grilled Zucchini, Asparagus Tips, Oven-Dried Tomatoes, Baby Spinach, Grilled Portobello Linguine, Parmesan Reggiano Cheese	\$50 ea.	\$	
JUST FOR FUN!	Sunday Morning Breakfast Buffet	\$37 ea.	\$	
	Friday Night Karaoke	\$5 ea.	\$	
	Saturday Night Masquerade Ball The only good time to wear a mask in recovery! Get a fancy costume or just come-as-you-are. Dance the night away! <small>(\$35 at the door)</small>	\$10 ea.	\$	
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Tradition 10: NA has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

I have lots of opinions. As an addict, I'm sure I have more than most. Somewhere along the line, I learned to base my decisions on no real information whatsoever. Opinions became my facts, the facts on which I based my beliefs and actions. I could wield them in whatever way that served me, pretty much always leaving destruction in my wake. The sickness in me thrives on drama and controversy. That's part of the insanity of my disease. More than ever, I've come to understand that opinions are not facts. They can be divisive and create disunity when shared. That's where Tradition 10 comes in.

The traditions are the icing on the cake for this addict. The 12 steps of NA have changed my life. They have taught me to live life daily and have given me the freedom to recover. The 12 steps teach me how to deal with me on a daily basis. The traditions tell me how to deal with others, inside and outside of the rooms. They give me some simple guidelines on how home groups should act, and interact, as well. Using the traditions helps me fight against my disease by giving me some real information on how I should be acting. They help me practice sanity.

Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. The 1st Tradition tells me in order to do that, I must strive to preserve unity at all costs. Tradition 10 not only protects my sanity, it also protects our unity. NA only cares about what I want to do about my problem and how our members can help. That seems simple, doesn't it? Recovery. Everything else is an outside issue. Medication? Outside issue. Counseling and other mental health services? Outside issue. Medical diagnoses? Outside issue. Even things that are seemingly recovery based aren't within the scope of NA to dictate. Isn't taking a narcotic an inside issue? Don't they tell us what is okay and what is not? No! Sometimes that is still a hard concept for me to grasp.

I've come to see that everything in my life doesn't have to impact my recovery. If I am willing and choose to do the work, I can recover no matter what. I can stay clean regardless of what job I have, where I live, what diagnosis I have, and what medications I take (for me). No matter what. Since being clean impacts every part of my life, my recovery does still apply in all these areas. That's why I still seek guidance from a sponsor on how to best incorporate spiritual principles into daily living. Tradition 10 puts the ball in my court.

NA does tell me certain things for a fact. Some things they don't need to have an opinion on. They know it works. Which is: how to work the NA program, regardless of any of these things. Going to meetings, working with a sponsor, using spiritual principles, remaining accountable, and asking for other addicts' personal experiences. These things can keep me safe and have been shown to work no matter what else is going on. This is the idea I try to live by. (Continued pg.5)

At any time, I can use the 10th Step to stay within the guard rails of living by spiritual principles. I find it necessary to refer to what I've learned from the writing and practice of the previous nine steps. I first had to admit that my addiction had beaten, defeated and had given me the gift of utter desperation. Addiction truly did a number on me.

This honest admission allowed me to surrender. We often overlook the importance of this, and the results can be fatal. I had to open a door to a spiritual solution. My life was so messed up that if someone told me that bobbing my head in a toilet would keep me clean, I probably would have done it. My sponsor generously offered me to use his HP until I found my own. For my spirit to come back to life, there had to be something that was larger, loving and powerful from which to seek guidance.

Left to my own devices I shot dope and pilfered things to get more. After realizing this divine power, I made the decision to relinquish control over to it. By far, this was one of the best decisions I ever made. Because I had a strong need to be in control, this was not any easy thing to do. I grab control back regularly, but the times have grown much shorter over the years.

Then I embarked on a journey of self-discovery commonly known as a 4th Step. At first it seemed daunting, but after a few conversations with my sponsor, he asked me: "Do you like yourself now?"

"Not really," I honestly replied. "In this step," he said, "you'll discover some of the main reasons for that lack of self-love. By doing that you can affect some changes that will turn that whole belief around for you."

Little did I realize just how profound those changes would be! It revealed to me some of the patterns which had kept me stuck on stupid for a good many years. I had become an expert at self-destruction and didn't even realize it.

During that inventory, I also got to write about some of the *positive* aspects of me. I had a hard time with this. My sponsor suggested I ask some of my friends, which miraculously, I now had. Some of the answers surprised me. Loving, funny, helpful and a few more.

I read this to my sponsor, and he laughed at a few parts. I was offended, but he explained to me that the reason he laughed was because he had done some of the same things. My 6th Step was a place where I made monumental growth. It revealed to me the places where self-centered fear had altered my personality to being almost completely unrecognizable. I was a mess and there were no quick fixes.

In the 7th Step I could grasp what these different defects had done to damage me and work on them to alleviate the pain they would continue to cause if I stayed on that path. This is an ongoing effort to be a better human being day by day!

The 8th and 9th Step were about atonement. They've made easier it for me to live in my own skin. I had to pursue some of them as if my life depended on it because it basically did. Righting my past wrongs made it easier to have an assuaged conscience. Guilt, shame and resentments all poisoned the well of my serenity. If there is one thing that I truly value these days, it's my peace and serenity.

The 10th Step allows me a way to watch my actions, beliefs, resentments and any other ways I can, after 24 years of recovery, still act out. It is like having a self-made tool for keeping me in check. I've had to use it many times over the years.

One thing I don't much like doing is making amends for my actions. I keep a close tab on how I treat others. Do I treat others with respect even when they don't respect me? Do I keep my tongue confined even when I feel like voicing my opinion in a negative manner? The 10th Step is an effective tool in the ongoing battle of learning to be a good person. Writing, like no other form of communication, puts things in front of me that I can't easily dismiss. Course correction is a good thing.

Sometimes I find that I have been inappropriate in my interactions with others. This step gives me the tools to be able to go back and make the effort to make an amends. It cleans my side of the street and hopefully mends the fences I straddle everyday as I go through life. Also, one of the most important things about amends is not repeating the same mistake that led to it to begin with. It's very important to have insight into the mistakes and actions that lead me astray of my spiritual values.

There is no such thing as impunity. Following God's will instead of my twisted thinking makes for smoother relationships with others. When I follow my heart and stay out of my head things tend to go a whole lot better. I must remember control is an illusion that I can't afford to live with.

The importance of living by spiritual principles in my life plays itself out daily. To reverse course would be devastating and possibly fatal. I'm not willing to risk the high prices I could pay for my transgressions. My number one priority is staying clean 1 day at a time.

My number two priority is becoming a little bit better human day by day! The 10th Step gives me the ammunition I need to fend off the misinformation the disease tries to feed me. I'm truly blessed to have this life saving tool!

A. Before I knew what any of the process of working the steps looked like. I was unwilling to do an 8th and 9th step. In fact, when I told my sponsor I would start my first round of steps, I specifically told them that I didn't want to do steps 8 & 9. I can't remember my direct reasoning for that (I didn't have a lot of rational reasoning at only days clean 🤔). My sponsor lovingly reminded me that the steps are in order for a reason, and we would cross that bridge when we got there (even with that I was still unwilling).
By the time the 8th and 9th step came, like magic, I was ready!

From you all, I learned about what making amends could look like for those who were no longer on this earth, through letters and living amends, etc. I learned that amends did not mean the half assed "I'm sorry" that I had given a million times to many people in my life, but part of the process for me was to change the behavior that caused me to need the amends in the first place.

Really important for me, I gained a DESIRE to not have to make the same amends later to different people, because I was changing some behaviors. It's one thing to be aware of the behavior, a completely different battle for me to not act on it.

I definitely don't do it perfectly, and it shows in my 10th Step (daily inventory), but I'm so grateful for the process.

A. When I got to step 8 I was directed to just make a list with nothing else on the agenda. I was not to think about step 9 at all. When I got to 9 I was instructed NOT to do any amends without talking to my sponsor first which helped me not make a fool of myself or hurt myself or anyone else and also to check my motives. I had to go into my amends with the intent to clean up my side of the street, nothing else. I was wrong because.... therefore.....
Simple. Not asking for forgiveness or looking for an amends from them.

A. I didn't get much direction about how to work the 10th Step, or maybe I didn't hear it. So at first, I'd explain in great detail why I was sorry, but I made sure you understood your part in it. Wrong way to make an amends. When I had a few years clean, I met an amazing woman in NA who taught me the proper way to make an amends. It's simple, she said. You say, "I was wrong, I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do to correct the harm I've done?"

This made it clear that I address only *my* part in the issue and own up to my part. It's always good to look up the dictionary's definition of the word. Most state that an "amend" is making up for the damage caused.

The most important part is that you discuss each amends with your sponsor before you rush off and make things worse.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Game Group – Ray of Hope	Saturday, October 5 th , 12 th , 19 th , 26 th 2-4pm
WSLD XXXVIII	Thursday, October 17 th – Monday October 21 st
NACONA	Thursday October 31 st – Sunday November 3 rd
Sponsorship Family Feud – ARCNA Fundraiser	Saturday September 26 th 11:00am
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday October 26 th 8:00am

Tradition 10 (Continued)

Tradition 10 doesn't tell me not to have opinions, or not to share them. On the contrary, NA strives to provide freedom to the recovering addict, and doesn't presume to tell me what to do. (Wouldn't having personal opinions be an outside issue, anyway?) What it tells me is that I do not speak for Narcotics Anonymous. It tells me, in my personal program, that I need to interact and share in a caring way, so that the message does not get misconstrued. Just by being a member of this fellowship, anything I say or do can reflect onto the fellowship. I don't speak for NA, but what I say can be taken as the stance of this fellowship. I attempt to stay away from opinions within the rooms at all costs.

I strive to remain mindful. I say "I" and "me" in meetings, and stick to what I do, not what anyone else should do. There are no ultimatums here (due to the 3rd Tradition, "...the only requirement for membership), and I can simply provide suggestions. There is no true black or white answer for any of this. We are all so different. Nobody can tell me whether I am clean or not in this program. NA doesn't attempt to tell me how to deal with things outside the scope of the 12 Steps, and their way of recovery. That's why I feel safe here. That's why this is my home. Enough addicts leave on their own accord; we don't need any help finding reasons to leave the rooms. Without the traditions, unity would be a distant idea. Discord drives addicts away, the literature tells me this. When addicts leave, they die. Tradition 10 helps there be less differences, so I can better look for the similarities. I then can have a real shot at this thing. It keeps those outside of the program from having any ammo to use against the fellowship. We are the best chance we have.

Just for today, I can be loving, and contribute to the safety of NA for everyone in the rooms. Just for today, I can try to incorporate Tradition 10 into my dealings with others, and within my home group and service areas. Just for today, through the traditions, NA gives me the freedom to recover from the seemingly hopeless state of addiction. For that I am grateful.

Katie C.

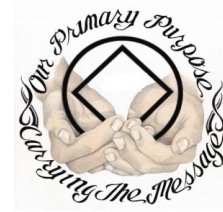
Sponsorship Behind the Walls

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

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