



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

January 2025

Greetings from Arizona!

My name is Ryan and I'm an addict. My first experience with a spiritual awakening came upon waking up after my first night in prison. That morning in 2013 I woke up in a bed with a blanket and a pillow, I had about 5 cigarettes given to me by some of the guys, and I was able to walk to the chow hall for breakfast. It was at that moment I realized that my life was better in prison than it was on the street. That was hard to swallow, but it allowed me to understand what step one is all about.

“We admitted we were powerless over our addiction and that our life was unmanageable.” Admitting my life was unmanageable was easy to do considering I was waking up in prison and would be spending the next three years of my life there. Knowing that this was my third time in prison added another layer of unmanageability to the equation. Admitting I was powerless over my addiction though would require a new level of honesty that I had never been able to practice before. This new form of honesty is self-honesty. For the first time in my many years of using, I was able to relate to the line in our literature that says “It is through our inability to accept personal responsibility that we were creating our own problems. We were unable to face life on life's terms.” For the first time I was able to be honest with myself and admit that I have a problem, I am an addict, and I need help.

This form of self-honesty led me to another spiritual principle known as acceptance. Acceptance was something very new to me. Taking ownership of my situation instead of blaming other people. Accepting that my best efforts keep landing me in prison. Accepting that my way doesn't work. Accepting that once I pick up and use something I cannot stop. Accepting that if I don't do something different, I will most likely spend the rest of my life in prison or possibly dead. Accepting that I'm powerless over my addiction and that my life is unmanageable.

When confronting myself with these truths I am reminded of one of our readings called We Do Recover. It starts off by saying “When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on the best we can to the bitter ends; jails, institutions, or death or find a new way to live.” Finding a new way to live leads me to the spiritual principle of surrender. Surrender for me is one of the most powerful principles that I get to practice even today.

When I surrender it means I get to stop fighting. It means I stop forcing everything to go my way. It means I surrender to the solution instead of staying in the problem. Forms of surrender I got to practice early in my recovery were going to meetings, working steps, reading literature, talking to other recovering addicts, sharing in meetings, being of service to others, and taking suggestions from my sponsor. All of these are examples of me surrendering to a new way of life. I thank my Higher Power for the program of Narcotics Anonymous and for giving me the gift of desperation which led me to find the willingness to try this way of life. My clean date is May 21, 2013. I have eleven years clean and have never had to return to prison since my release at the end of 2015. I encourage you to dig in and give this new way of life a chance. Thank you for letting me share.

Ryan M

In January, we cover the first step, "We admitted we were powerless over our addiction and that our lives have become unmanageable."

How did you work the first step with your sponsor? Did you try to define powerlessness and unmanageability? Did you provide examples of each? How does the first step continue to work in your life?

Here are the answers we received from our membership.

- A. The hallmark of an unmanageable life is incarceration. As for powerlessness, it seems to be a recurring theme in my life. Thankfully, it's not the same powerlessness I brought with me when I came through the doors.
- A. Many of us never went to jail. Some come to the rooms with jobs, cars, marriages, kids. Unmanageability is not so obvious.
- A. I knew at 17 that I was powerless over drugs, but at times I felt like my life was manageable. I mean, I still could score every day, and pay for my motel room, and I only went to jail about every six months, so what's so unmanageable about that? I had to hit a different bottom – that state where I knew that I could not go on one more day. That day I asked some higher power for help. The unmanageability finally struck home. I went to the refrigerator to get out a bottle of pop. There was never anything in the refrigerator but soda (to help with hangovers) and antacid medication. On the door, I saw a year-old NA meeting list. It hit me like a ton of bricks. "I can go back to NA," I thought. I did and was quickly surrounded by loving members who believed in my ability to stay clean. That, to me, is Grace.
- A. When I got here I still had my job (two, actually) , my car and my apartment, but I was suicidal and spiritually bankrupt. I was the last person I wanted to be alone with. When I worked the First Step with my sponsor I had to look at the fact that I had two jobs but was two months behind on my car payment – it got repossessed after I got clean. I had two jobs but was 35,000 in debt in 1988. Once I got honest I could see the unmanageable aspects. The powerlessness over people, places and things is still a work in progress daily.

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.

Our meeting was a standalone meeting, and we were able to bang our heads against the wall, break traditions, act out in self-will, create disunity, and at times struggle . Then after each meeting from a kind, compassionate, and loving place, those more experienced members would help guide us in the right direction. By allowing us to struggle, they provided us with the opportunity to make our common welfare a priority, which in turn led to unity.

When I started attending "Birds of a Feather," there were three to four members a week, and very little structure. Through the guidance of those H&I members prior to getting released there were 20 to 30 members attending weekly, a monthly business meeting, men were sponsoring men, we put on an annual recovery event, and this was all done as a result of becoming united.

This experience was monumental in my growth as a member of NA. I have served in many different capacities in my 14 years of recovery. Without gaining a better understanding and application of the traditions I would have created a ton of wreckage inside the rooms.

I have a big personality and believe at times my opinion is the only correct one. This perspective is in complete contradiction of what our first tradition stands for. This is where anonymity comes into play. I have learned my opinion is as equally as important as everyone else's, and coming together in unity provides a much richer and more fruitful atmosphere of recovery for all members to thrive in. We are so much stronger together than I could ever be on my own.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

5

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

Game Group – Ray of Hope	Saturday, January 4 th , 11 th , 18 th , 25 th 2-4PM
Day of the Dinosaur (West Valley)	Saturday, January 25 th
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday, January 25 th 9:30AM

SAVE THE DATE
WEST VALLEY'S
6TH ANNUAL DAY OF THE DINOSAUR



JANUARY 25TH, 2025
9661 N. 59TH AVENUE,
GLENDALE, AZ

MORE WILL BE REVEALED

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**