



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

March 2025

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.

After getting over the hump of acquiring a Higher Power, I needed to find a way to use it. Confused, I asked many folks in meetings how they did Step Three. That confused me more.

In the beginning, I didn't even know how, when, or where to pray. Being the sort of addict that didn't care if the door was shut when I puked, the first time I prayed, no one else could be home, the bedroom door was locked and I think my first prayer was, "Thank you for this food on our plate..." Once completed, I had the insane urge to duck, feeling the world was going to shake!

After a while in recovery, I would pray to see that "burning bush." Months later I realized that seeing the "burning bush" would have been more of a psychiatric emergency than the original problem!

Inviting my Higher Power into my life has been a process, from talking aloud to whatever is there to having bona fide evidence of a Higher Power working in my life.

"Anyone needing a Higher Power can borrow mine," we hear in meetings. To tell you the truth, you can borrow mine. He has a lot more free time, not like when I was new (the first five years). I would constantly recite lists, change orders and make demands, expecting free, next-day shipping!

Nowadays, perhaps I have become a little less needy. My morning ritual is one of turning my wife, life and knife over. I lose all complaining rights to whatever transpires during the day. That does not mean that I don't complain ... I am human and still have that wacky sense of entitlement that addicts have.

Today, when I feel that twisting gut, elevated cardio breathing, or just plain frustration, I have tools!

It costs nothing to pray, I can do it anywhere, and I can even look someone in the eyes, listen to what they are saying, and in my mind send Love or Peace or Clarity into the situation, if it is my H.P.'s will.

Even shrugging my shoulders and saying "Whatever" can be a form of prayer if my intentions are to surrender and submit any agenda I have.

A clear example of letting go is when I give to the 7th Tradition. That is no longer my money – it is up to the group to decide. My willingness to submit to what that group decides at the next business meeting replaces my willingness, and I pray my Higher Power attends.

JJ

Tradition Three: The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

The welcoming atmosphere of NA flourishes when we observe our Third Tradition. Our book *It Works: How and Why* tells us in the Third Tradition: "Any addict who walks into a meeting, even a using addict, displays a level of willingness that cannot be discounted." How welcoming are you and your group to the newcomer?

Addiction does not discriminate, nor should we when a newcomer comes in the door, even if he or she is impaired. Of course, we can't allow repeated disruptions in our meetings; but in many cases when the impaired addict arrives, a few members can talk to that person outside the meeting to avoid further interruption to the meeting. Some of us are quite skilled in talking to those who arrive at meetings still under the

influence. Safety of the individual and the group, surely, must be a prime consideration.

We usually cannot judge a person's level of willingness at our first chat, nor should we try. We should try to "meet the addict where he or she is," not where we want or expect them to be.

When studying this Tradition, it may be helpful to ask yourself this question: "How did this Tradition help me remain in NA?" Many of us get here and stay clean from day one. Unfortunately, for others, a series of relapses finally hold our permanent seat in the rooms. If you have relapsed, how did others treat you? Can you extend that same spirit of tolerance and acceptance to the addict who may arrive still on a mood-altering drug? **(Continued on pg.3)**

What about the addict on medication-assisted treatment? How does our group, and how do we, respond?

For the group, what might get in the way of your group practicing the Third Tradition? Is it one or two members who have decided they are authorities? In NA according to our *Basic Text*, “One addict is never superior to another...This Tradition guarantees our freedom to recover.”

We know that addiction is often a response to loneliness and alienation. Do you remember how you felt in high school when the “cool kids” didn’t speak to you? Many of us describe arriving in NA and feeling that we “fit,” perhaps for the first time in our lives.

The Third Tradition is vital to a welcoming group and a welcoming addict. How is your group practicing this Tradition? How are you? Are you making sure you spend a few minutes after your meetings to welcome the newcomer?

We never know how a few words of encouragement may mean the difference between an addict returning to the streets or to his or her next meeting.

Anonymous

3rd Concept: *“The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.”*

According to Twelve Concepts for NA Service, “In day-to-day matters, the groups have given our service boards and committees the practical authority necessary to do the jobs assigned them. This is not a blank check issued to the service structure; the groups still bear final authority. To make the Concept work, we must carefully select trusted servants.”

If we explore Tradition Two, it says, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” When we look up the words “govern” or “governance,” the dictionary’s definition is to “sway, control, regulate.” Leadership in our Fellowship, however, requires a different set of skills.

The principle of “servant leadership” applies well in our program. According to *The Center for Servant Leadership*, “a servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the ‘top of the pyramid,’ servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of other first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.”

What types of skills should we look for in our trusted servants? Here are a few skills that most leadership experts agree are vital to success as a leader.

- Honesty and integrity – Our leaders often handle funds and other delicate issues. These two qualities are vital in our leadership.
- An ability to inspire – Let’s face it, we don’t have people shoving each other out of the way to take service positions. Our leaders, by their behavior and their suggestions, should be able to recruit others who share the servant leadership mindset.
- Strong communication skills – As many groups and committees abandon Robert’s Rules of Order and move toward consensus-based decision-making, strong communication skills including listening skills, are vital. Listening more than we talk is one way we can be better leaders.
- Accountability – Suiting up, showing up, and being accountable, even when we may stumble, are vital leadership qualities.
- Decision-making skills – Do you know people who struggle to make decisions? An ability to consider the evidence and decide rather than continuing to table important issues is one critical leadership skill.

These are just a few of the leadership skills we should look for in our trusted servants. The 3rd Concept tells us we delegate the authority necessary to fulfill responsibilities in that position or committee. It’s a delicate balance to find those willing to serve with these critical skills.

(Continued pg. 4)

For example, sending an untrained volunteer in to lead an H&I meeting can have a negative outcome, even causing us to lose our meeting and damage our reputation. An untrained Public Relations volunteer can violate our 10th Tradition, causing us to appear to support a cause when we have no opinion on outside issues.

On the other hand, many of us learn how to lead by stepping into positions for which we feel unprepared. When we step forward in faith, we usually find others willing to mentor and guide us.

Service is an art, not a science. We can constantly make corrections to course when we find we have made mistakes, even at times removing leaders who fail to honor their commitments, or we find lack essential leadership traits.

No one said service in NA is easy. However, service can be gratifying. Those with a servant's heart may consider service a sacred trust. When we enter service with the right motives—to serve not govern—the path is clear.

Step 3 Q&A

Q. In the March newsletter, we discuss Step 3, the step (besides Step 1) that I found the most difficult. What was your experience with the 3rd Step?

A. What has helped me with Step 3 is the concept of a God and higher power (of my own understanding). Turning my will and my life over to the care of a higher power, I move from self-will to the care of HP or GOD (good orderly direction). This consists of the collective experience of a meeting, my understanding of my God (Creator), nature, spiritual principles, the steps, our primary purpose, the traditions, meditation (which of course is part of our steps), the therapeutic value of one addict helping another, movement of energy in my body through hiking and physical exercise, breathwork, etc.

A. I had a hard time with Step 3 because I was quite sure I was handling my finances effectively, so why would I turn that part of my life over? Around year three, many life circumstances caused me to realize that I needed to surrender *all* aspects of my life (and my character) over to some power greater than me. Today, when I feel stressed or overwhelmed about work or a specific situation, I take a few moments to turn over that problem to the Universal Power that can handle it better than me.

A. You cannot work a thorough 4th and the ensuing steps if you have not worked a thorough Step 3.

A. It was obvious to me and anyone who knew me that I wasn't doing such a good job running my life my way. The 3rd step offered me a different way to do things. It was like a giant breath of fresh air.

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, March 8 th , 15 th , 22 nd 2-4PM
MACCNA XV	March 14 th – 16 th
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday, March 2 nd 10am-3pm
Phoenix H&I BBQ	Saturday, March 30 th 12pm-5pm

PHX Area's




FREE FOOD
&
FUN

SPEAKERS
&
RAFFLE

BBQ
SUNDAY MARCH 30, 2025 12PM
1212 E. GLENDALE AVE.
BRING A CHAIR & LEARN ABOUT H&I

FEATURING:
2ND ANNUAL
Homegroup OLYMPICS
SPECIAL

CONTACT AARON F: (602) 214-7050



MACCNA XV
"A Lifelong Journey"
March 14-16, 2025
Yuma, AZ

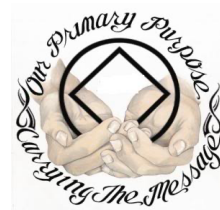
Sponsorship Behind the Walls

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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