



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

April 2025

This too shall pass

On the horizon, I could see the light. It seemed I was drawing closer. The ocean was calm, I thought I could just reach out and touch it. A fools thought.

A storm erupted, waves pushed me farther from the light. The light, surrounded by fog, is so dim I might confuse the stars in the sky for it. I am not lost, but also not found.

Doubt has set in and with it comes pain, inflicted both by myself and by others. I want to leap off this vessel and drown in the ocean, letting its icy grip envelop me, taking me to its crushing depths.

I know, this too shall pass. One of the phrases in recovery I have clung to, a life raft in uncertain seas. I know that in time the fog will lift, the waves will still and I once again will find the light.

Recovery has taught me many things, like I am not alone. But being incarcerated there are times where I look around and I am unable to find my fellowship. I know they are there but the only sound I hear is that of the waves lapping against the sides of this vessel.

But there is One I can feel and even though I cannot see Her I know She is there. She tells me to never lose hope. She feeds me when I am hungry and lets me drink from Her when the salt from these waters will not quench my thirst.

I have come far in recovery. Even though slipping into the deep dark waters would seem nice for the moment, I know it is not the answer. I will never give in, no matter what.

No matter what the ocean throws at me, I will remain on this vessel, heading through the great unknown. One day I will be swept upon a beach, finding solid ground, able to journey on to the light. My Higher Power will be right beside me, holding me up while my legs remember how to walk. On that path if you find me, take my arm, so we may walk towards the light together.

I am an addict. My name is Todd O.

For Loners, Silence Is Harm

The Narcotics Anonymous fellowship is meant to be a lifeline, but it fails those who need it most. Some of you may already be dismissing this as an attack on Narcotics Anonymous, but I'm here making a statement that we need to fix our fellowship—the fellowship we all love. If we don't address these problems, we're allowing suffering addicts to slip through the cracks. So listen up to The Loner's perspective that's often missed and rarely spoken.

Many of us used in isolation—not just because of addiction, but due to fear, anxiety, depression, trauma and social anxiety. We came to NA seeking acceptance, only to find that our fellowship doesn't always live up to its promise of unconditional love. Too often, meetings become social clubs where the same voices dominate, cliques form, and those who struggle with social skills are left on the outside. If you don't "fit in," it's easy to feel invisible—something we thought we were escaping by walking through those doors. Social acceptance isn't the same as personal recovery, but it matters. When we create exclusivity, we push people away

from the healing they came for. No one should create exclusivity, we push people away from the healing they came for. No one should feel invisible in a room that promises belonging and love.

Where do we go from here? First, let's talk about The Loner pamphlet. It's one of the most important pieces of literature in NA because it acknowledges something we don't talk about enough: not everyone finds connection in our rooms. But that pamphlet was written in a different era, and thankfully, it is already in the process of being revised. That revision is critical because the world has changed. The Loner was originally written for addicts in remote areas or those physically unable to attend meetings—but today, loners exist in the rooms too. They show up, share sometimes, and still leave feeling just as alone. The original pamphlet tells them to "keep coming back," to "write letters," to "find other ways to connect." But what if they've done that? What if they keep showing up, keep reaching out, and keep getting ignored?

(Continued on pg. 2)

More importantly, we need to update not just the literature but our actions. We take personal inventory and assess our behaviors in many steps—especially step 10, which calls for daily self-reflection. We often focus on whether we’ve harmed someone, but do we ever ask ourselves if and how we’ve loved someone? The current Loner pamphlet tells isolated addicts to reach out, but it doesn’t ask the fellowship to reach back. That has to change. So let’s start asking ourselves: When was the last time we made a newcomer feel seen? Do we go out of our way to connect with those who don’t naturally fit in? Do we call back when we miss a call? Do we check in with the quiet person in the room, or do we only stick with our usual circle?

For many of us, the fellowship itself becomes a Higher Power in Step 3—something greater than ourselves we can rely on. But a Higher Power is meant to be loving and caring. When we fail to act with compassion, we risk turning that Higher Power into just another source of rejection and pain. A fellowship is only as strong as the love it extends to those who need it most. And if we continue to tell loners that they have to work harder to connect, while making no effort to meet them halfway, then we choose to let them slip away.

Fellowship is more than just showing up. It’s about making sure that no addict, no matter how awkward, quiet, or socially anxious, ever feels alone in a room full of people. The literature says, “...no addict seeking recovery need ever die.” But loneliness kills, too. We have the power to change that—if we’re willing to step outside our comfort zones and make sure no one gets left behind.

And what happens if we don’t change? How many people have walked into our rooms, sat down, listened, and left—never to return? How many have slipped through the cracks because no one reached out, no one asked their name, no one made them feel like they mattered?

We tell ourselves that “the ones who want it will keep coming back,” but what about the ones who did keep coming back—week after week, month after month—only to leave because they felt unloved over and over again? What if their disease told them they weren’t welcome, and our silence confirmed it? How many more will we lose before we admit that silence is harm? If even one addict walks away from NA feeling like they were better off alone, we’ve failed. And if they don’t make it back, we don’t get to say, “It wasn’t our fault.” Because it was. And unless we change, it still is.

The revision of The Loner pamphlet is a step in the right direction. But literature alone won’t fix this problem. It’s up to us—each and every one of us—to make sure that the words on the page translate into action in our rooms. So ask yourself—*who’s the loner in your meeting right now? Who will you reach out to today? Because if you don’t, if we don’t, we’ll keep failing the very people we claim to love.*

Ezra K.

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.

I was in a meeting in Prescott last year and my partner happened to mention my home group, which decided not to offer key tags in our meeting.

“How can you let the newcomer surrender?” a visitor from another state asked, clearly upset at our group’s decision. “We ask if there are any newcomers. If so, we welcome them and talk to them after the meeting,” I responded.

While this visitor remained unconvinced, the beautiful thing about NA’s Fourth Tradition is that each group can choose how it can best carry the message. If we use NA literature, abide by our Traditions and call ourselves NA, we are usually on solid ground.

I travel widely for work, and I love walking into an NA meeting in another part of the country (or world) to see how other groups do things. One of the coolest things I ever saw was at a group somewhere in the Midwest. The secretary of the meeting took a few notes as people spoke. At the end of the meeting, the secretary recapped some of the highlights of the meeting as spoken by its attendees. I found that particularly helpful. Traveling gets very lonely and sitting in hotel rooms can be dangerous for my recovery. His little recap of the meeting “gems” helped me head back to my hotel (complete with very noisy cocktail lounge) in a much better space. Each group runs things a little differently. Some spend up to fifteen minutes reading many of our readings; some groups run a short business portion of their meeting, although our Fifth Tradition in our book *It Works How and Why* cautions us not to take up valuable meeting time to talk

business. Other groups pick what they read, limiting the readings to a few so that members have more time to share. None are the right way if it is your group’s decision, and it doesn’t affect other groups.

According to an archived article at narchive.com, “Sometimes it’s hard to know what affects NA as a whole. The Fourth Tradition offers a way to balance the freedom of autonomy with our responsibility to preserve NA unity. Autonomy encourages groups to become strong and lively but also reminds them they are a vital part of a greater whole: The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.” We consider our common welfare when we make decisions in our groups. If we wonder why a group does things a certain way, we can ask politely. We are proud of our home groups. We can get very defensive about how they are run. We sometimes feel “challenged” when others approach us about why we run the meeting the way we do. Politely asking why the groups do things a certain way, or if you do not agree with how that group runs its meeting and you believe it affects NA as a whole, try a civil discussion. Home group members will often meet an angry or indignant confrontation when you are emotional with equal emotion. It’s only human nature to “defend our turf.”

I have my own personal two-pronged rule of thumb. If it does not affect NA as a whole and it is not my home group, I usually find it better to say nothing.

What are your thoughts on this important tradition?

Nancy G.

When I first got here and heard everyone talking about the 4th Step, I thought, “No way am I sharing this with anyone I know. I’ll find a preacher to share it with; he won’t tell anyone what a mess I am. Of course, this was before I had worked any step of any kind.

When I got serious about working the Steps, I got serious about the first step first. I found a sponsor who I knew had been around and could help me. To get the help I needed, I knew I was going to have to be honest with this man. This would be a whole ‘nother level of honesty with which I was unfamiliar.

Working the first three Steps allowed me the time to develop trust in my sponsor, in the program and in the process. I became committed. When it was time to do my 4th Step, I was willing to be as thorough as I could, just like the literature told me I needed to be. Not that it wasn’t hard to put that stuff down on paper; it was torture. Seeing some of the stuff I had done and had done to me was not my idea of a good time. But if I wanted to get the benefits of the program, I had to take that step.

My sponsor reminded me that, “It’s not like you’re doing this stuff now – it’s the past.” Once that sunk into my thick skull, it became easier to write it down. And there was no doubt it my mind I was going to share it with my sponsor, even though I was not looking forward to that day.

(Continued on page 4)

Q&A

Each month on our social media page, we ask members to reflect on the step or tradition of the month. This month it’s Step Four, “We made a searching moral inventory of ourselves.” Our members did not disappoint us. Here are their answers.

A. I was told the 4th step would help me “uncover” and “discover” to “recover”. Sure my first 4th step was uncomfortable to say the least, thank god I built a strong foundation with a HP in the 1st three steps before writing one. When I shared it, I was reminded by my sponsor that she was an instrument of my HP. The “other human being.” But God was first and already knows that “our secrets die in the light of exposure.”

A Just do it. No procrastinating! You lived through it. You'll survive telling someone else about it. Take that huge dead weight off your back!

A. But I’m not fearless yet. My morals got downright scary. Fortunately my higher power dragged me through the process and the feeling of accomplishment was uplifting enough to propel me to continue. It works...

A. All of my 4th Steps have something in common. I wrote a lot only to find that I really didn't have many things to talk about. What I found out I did was dress up my defects in as many different costumes as possible so they looked like a lot of things. In the end, the problem was always the same one. I am afraid that I won't have enough. Enough of what? Well, that's where all that writing in circles happened.

A. I was worried that I would uncover some dark truth about myself. I believed I was a really terrible person. What I found is I made a ton of bad choices and that didn't make me evil or defective, it really let me understand I was more confused than evil. It was easier to stay clean after dumping a lot of that garbage on a sponsor who could relate. In fact, I think she shared more than I did on my first fourth step.

A. My story was so stupid and disgusting. And repetitious. My brain hurt and my hand cramped. And who could possibly want to listen to that crap. Somebody told me to write it without thinking about sharing it. I was so shocked when I finally did share it in the 5th step with someone and they said "Me too. I can relate."

A. I just put it all on paper in the fourth step. As we remember it. Being thorough and honest to myself so I am prepared to discuss when a 5th step is done with my sponsor... fearless moral inventory

“Put it down on the paper like that’s all you’re going to do with it,” kept running through my head, so that is what I did. I prayed before I started writing, asking God to help me be honest and thorough in what I was writing.

Did this help? I really don’t know but I think I was honest and thorough so it must have. Every morning, I would answer a few questions, sometimes two, sometimes three or four, but I was consistent and persevered.

I did not look ahead to see what the next questions were going to be, either. I think this allowed me to concentrate on the matter at hand and not develop any uneasiness about the upcoming questions.

Finally, I got to the last question. When I read that question, I knew what my answer was, and it was so liberating. I was proud of myself for the honesty, commitment and perseverance I had shown in my writing and looked forward, with only minor trepidation to sharing it with my sponsor.

Tom T

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

4

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

Game Group – Ray of Hope	Saturday, April 5 th , 12 th , 19 th , 26 th 2-4PM
Spring Fling Picnic	April 5 th 11am-6:30pm
TSLD	April 12 th 11am-4pm
AZ Region Spring Assembly	Saturday, April 12 th 12-5pm
Spring Serenity Soiree <i>ARCNA Fundraiser</i>	Saturday, April 19 th
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday April, 26 th 10am-3pm

TSLD

PLANTING SEEDS OF SERVICE
PASC

Speaker Presentations

Phoneline
Activities
H&I

Public Relations
NY Eve

Saturday, April 12, 2025
1212 E. Glendale Ave, AZ
11am-4pm

Raffles
Fun
Food

Main Speaker at 11am

Questions? Contact Diane B. at 480-859-8362 Outdoors/Bring a Chair!

Arizona Region Spring Assembly

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

April 12, 2025
Starts at 12:00 pm
998 S. 6th Ave
Yuma AZ. 85364

Agenda

- Opening Introductions
- Reimagining and Revitalizing Service Committees
 - DRT/MAT as it relates to NA
 - H&I Basics
- Board of Directors Presentation and Election

Sign in online:

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87130383511>
 Join Zoom Meeting
 Meeting ID: 871 3038 3511 PW. Service

Dial by your location	
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)	+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)	+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)	+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Stephen S. rd@Arizona-na.org 520-979-2363
 Ryan M. rda@Arizona-na.org 480-749-2526

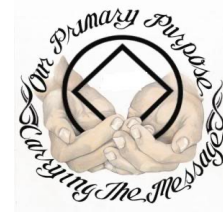


Sponsorship in Arizona for inmates is 100% voluntary and can begin with just a letter of willingness to participate. Once your message of interest has been received, your initial projects to be completed will be sent to you. After completion, a sponsor is then assigned to work with you as long as the 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