

the best of

**the heartbeat**

"The heart of NA beats when two addicts share their recovery"

SPECIAL EDITION



## NA EXPOSED ... OUR "TRUE" ORIGINS

The Greater Los Angeles Area of Narcotics Anonymous "**the heartbeat**" Newsletter Committee created an ad-hoc committee to research & investigate any and all PUBLISHED articles, written artifacts and stories which suggest Narcotics Anonymous (NA) existed prior to the July 1953 date cited in the Basic Text of NA. After several months of thorough research, this committee now presents the following published evidence, with its sources corroborated, for your consideration. *This information not only indicates NA existed as early as early as 1948, but also that it originated on the East Coast and not Southern California.*

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(Published in "**the heartbeat**" Mar/Apr 1997 issue)

## NO MATTER WHAT

Being the addict that I am, I got high no matter what life was offering. During good times, bad, happy, sad or even mad. But especially during the painful times.

Upon arriving into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, one of the most profound state to use again, even if you want to, "No Matter What".

This statement clicked on a light that guided me through my first year of recovery. Through the rude awakenings, spiritual progress, holidays, acceptance, denial and most of all - I was only 10 months clean.

Walking into my mother's house and finding her dead on her favorite couch was the most painful experience. Reaching out my hand to caress the cheek of the face I've loved all my life was very difficult. I was feeling the heaviness of death against my palm...and I knew I was never going to see her again. The soul that loved me "No Matter what". The emptiness was so painful, I found myself in a familiar fetal position, crying...10 months and 10 days clean.

But thanks to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, the 12 steps and the 12 traditions I am now able to accept the terms of life as they are. I am now able to be grateful for today and for the clean time I was able to share with my mom. I didn't have to use, even though some of the time the pain was so intense I wanted to. I didn't have to die spiritually because my mom died physically.

Thanks to Narcotics Anonymous I have a spiritual contact with a God of my understanding and with my mom. Thanks to the First Step, during the time of my bereavement I received freedom all over again. Thanks to Narcotics Anonymous one day at a time, "I don't ever have to use again, even if I want to; No Matter What".

**LORNA M.**

*(Published in "the heartbeat" May/June 1999 issue)*



**But thanks to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, The 12 steps and the 12 traditions I was able to walk through my pain."**

## DEALING WITH ILLNESS IN RECOVERY

My name is Patricia and I have been in Narcotics Anonymous for four years. Two years ago, I was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Boy, was I scared. And mad. And ashamed! You see, I could have prevented this by having safe sex, and taking care of my body. But I was too busy smoking crack to care about anything. But, let's go back a little. My doctors informed me in 1990 shortly after I had my first child that I should have a procedure called a cryoplasty because I had abnormal pap smears and lesions on my cervix. A biopsy was done and it came back malignant. Ladies - pap smears have a range of 1 to 5; 1 is normal, 5 is cancerous. I elected NOT to have it done because of STUPIDITY and FEAR. I chose to relapse instead (this is a whole different story!) I lived with painful sex, irregular menstrual cycles and my crack addiction. I was scared and angry with myself for being so careless with my body. I was also terrified of just the thought of surgery.

When I got pregnant in 1993, again my doctor (bless him) said that I really needed to have something done, giving me options like a: freezing the cervix and cutting away the lesions, or b: laser removal of the lesions, or c: total removal of the cervix. But I was still out there so I waited. After the birth of my daughter in May 1993, I entered a recovery program because I was tired and truly needed help. Plus, DCS intervened. Although I was still afraid, I opted to have the freezing technique done. I was informed that I must have pap smears every six months from that point on. By December of 1993, I'm knowing that my body was healed (my sick thinking) and I can have a normal life because I am in recovery. NOT! The sex was still painful, etc. I got pregnant with my third child and my latest "smear" showed some irregularities, but of course nothing could be done because of the pregnancy. Here it is seven months later and its back. Damn!

I started to question the program and its promises. I surrendered my life to it and one more time, I am an emotional wreck feeling unworthy of some happiness. Why me? Was this my punishment for being an addict, for endangering my children's lives, for being so uncaring about my body? Will I DIE? Where is my spirituality and my faith in my Higher Power? Where are all the tools of recovery that I have learned in the past few months? I couldn't even talk to my sponsor about this because of my ego, even though I really needed to know someone else cared.

Before it was time to have the surgery, and after being in so much self-induced turmoil, I finally gathered enough courage to do something I hadn't done in months - I got down on my knees and I PRAYED. I prayed for guidance, strength and my Higher Power's love, and also for acceptance regarding whatever was or was not going to happen to me and my family.

It is now the fall of 1997 and I have been cancer-free for two years now. I'm still praying, and staying as step-centered as possible with the help of my Higher Power, my sponsor, and my friends and family in NA. I have to change my old habits, be humble and take care of myself as my doctors suggest. I practice this the same way I do my recovery: One day at a Time. Thanks to NA for showing me a new way to live.

*(Published in "the heartbeat" Nov/Dec 1997 issue)*

## No Time to Call My Sponsor



Several weeks ago while walking in downtown Los Angeles during rush hour, I heard a voice. I was walking to purchase a new pair of shoes for my son's graduation. As you may be aware downtown Los Angeles during rush hour, especially at 7th Street and Flower is filled with traffic. I heard the voice and recognized it but did not know from which vehicle it came. The voice said, "Hey Wes!". I recognized that voice as of one of my main connection. Eventually, I caught a glimpse of the car, however I believed it was no way he could stop nor did I want him to. By the time I reached 7th and Hope streets, he had somehow negotiated traffic and stop at the corner right in front of me. Seated in the car were two bomb beauties with skirts up to their navels and of course the dope man. He asked where had I been and if he could somehow be of service. At this point there was no one to call and no member of the fellowship nearby. However, my higher power, whom I choose to call God, did for me what I could not do for myself. I responded to the dope man I was no longer in need of his services today and all day today. He politely gave me his pager number and home phone number. I ripped the number up as he drove away and I proceeded to be a responsible father. Please understand all the pieces were in place, money available women and the "P" funk dope with transportation. Only God gave me the courage and commitment to say "NO". There was no time to call my sponsor.

**Wesley W.**

## Working Shared Goals



How does one put into words the ignited sparks of tension at our most recent Area Service meeting? I wanted to reach out to them, to stop them, to explain, to make them somehow understand. Instead I could only watch as part of me, once again, gave in to those deep-seated feelings buried inside ... my growing sense of wanting to withdraw from service work. I watched in dismay as we continually allowed the disease to strike mercilessly at the very core of the ties that bind us together. It's still very hard to look back on and make any sense of it. But I guess that's just how life is when we decide to remove God from the meeting.

It's undeniable. We did all this damage ... to ourselves. The unnecessary confusion comes as a result of not asking for advice nor seeking any direction. We're always looking to bury mistakes made. We play at being leaders with a spiritual development and intellect insufficient to the task of handling the spiritual, personal and financial responsibilities expected of us. Instead of fighting direction, ignoring advice, or hiding from accountability, we need to take a hard look at these very issues. What piece of unfinished business is there? What unhealed wound has been opened? Something perhaps from our past of which we're ashamed?

Regretfully, the heart of the truth is we are becoming resistant to change and complacent. Our "It's not my job!" attitude, lack of trust, and fear of NA service is creating barriers between groups and service committees. Whatever happened to our common welfare and unity, the ultimate authority of a loving God, leadership as service instead of government? What has happened to our unconditional love? How could this have gone so wrong? Yet there was a time when we were whole; when the future, no matter how filled with conflict and uncertainty, was ours for the taking ... ours for the making. It wasn't even that long ago. Or was it?

What is becoming apparent is that no one remains unaffected by how another is treated at our Area meetings. Being of NA service has a profound impact on those seeking recovery. When we recruit newcomers to watch our service committee's duties and innovativeness, it is an inspiration that encourages members to work together. The process is designed to function in a service community committed to the vision of spreading our message. However, we must promote learning and use of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts to build leadership skills. This would create positive role models that demonstrate pride, accountability, and sensitivity toward the group's needs.

We must recover from the procrastination towards auditing the Area Service meeting guidelines. There are misleading beliefs about what is currently in place, and there is an avoidance of self-accountability by our trusted servants, as well as misuse of delegated authority. Guidelines must be absolutely clear, and each trusted servant must be crystal-clear about what each individual is responsible for. If someone's behavior is unacceptable, we must describe it, point out its consequences - including how other people are affected, and spell out the kind of behavior we require as stated in our guidelines.

Requesting trusted servants to sign an accountability statement would not only improve the level of trust from the groups, but also demonstrate an unmistakable commitment, one that exemplifies a selfless and loving attitude toward our primary purpose. Furthermore, it would prove a willingness to take responsibility for every choice, decision and action without blaming or finding excuses. Such an act confirms courage in surrendering to our service groups shared goals of working to find solutions...together.

In loving service,

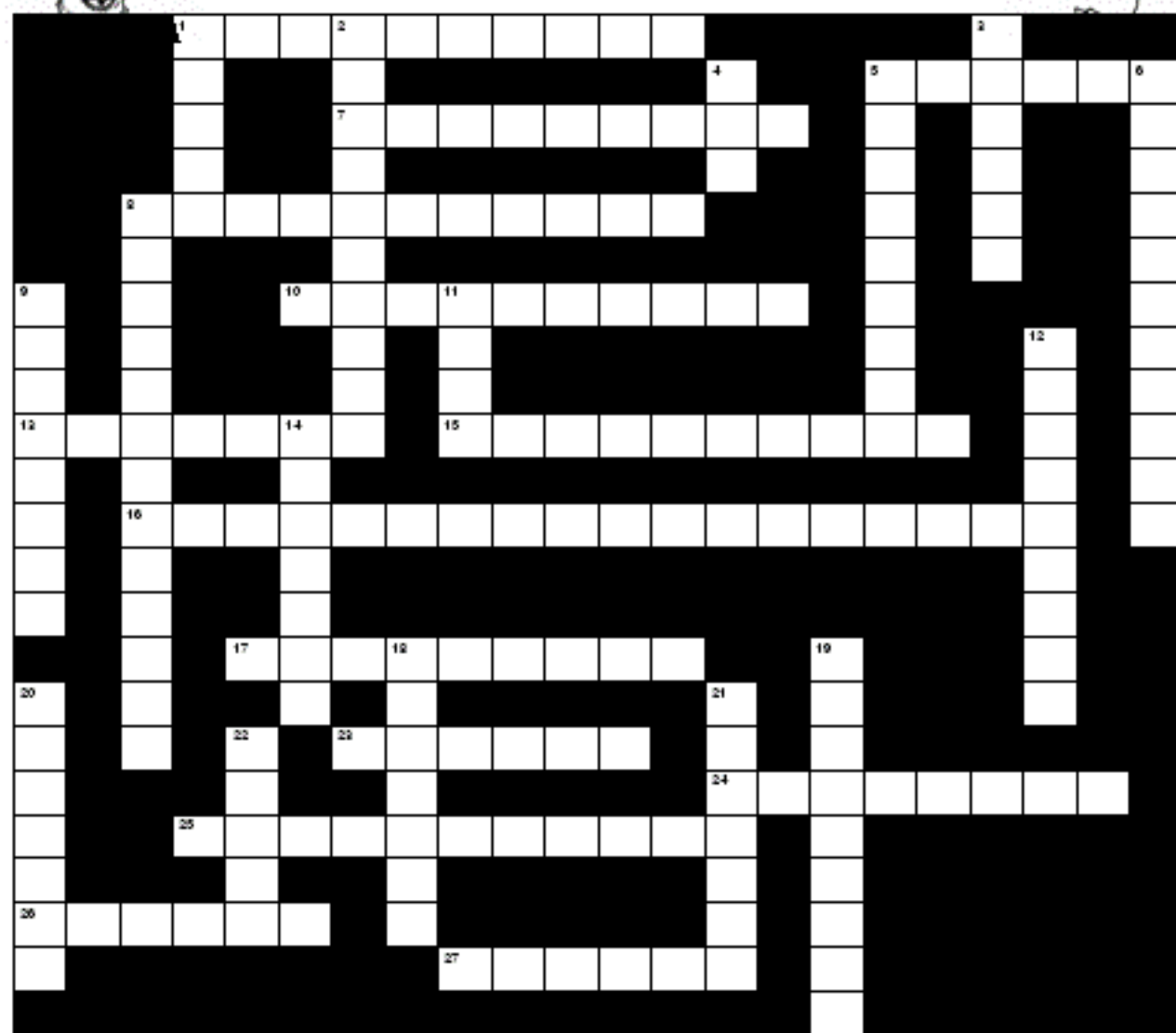
*Tony M*

*(Reprinted from "the heartbeat" May/June 1997 issue)*



# RECOVERY AND Relapse

[ANSWERS FOUND IN CHAPTER SEVEN OF BASIC TEXT]



### Across

1. Only a complete and total \_\_\_\_ of the First Step can save us. (Page 81)
5. \_\_\_\_ means change. (p.81)
7. We forget that we are \_\_\_\_ over other people. (p.78)
8. Relapse is a sign that we have a \_\_\_\_ in our program. (p.76)
10. When a \_\_\_\_ or any other emotional upheaval occurs, failure to practice the steps can result in a relapse. (p.77.)
13. There is something in our self-destructive personalities that cries for \_\_\_\_\_. (p.77)
15. Now clean and in the Fellowship, we need to keep ourselves \_\_\_\_ by others who know us well. (p.79)
16. We have never seen a person who lives the (two words) Program relapse. (p.76)
17. It is amazing how often \_\_\_\_ think that it is really abnormal for a drug addict to want to use. (p.79)
23. Part of our addictive pattern is that we can never get \_\_\_\_\_. (p.77)
24. \_\_\_\_ is one of the most destructive of defects; it drains of us of all positive energy. (p.77)
25. \_\_\_\_ to try what has worked for others is vital. (p.79)
26. We find that pain \_\_\_\_ is pain lessened. (p.80)
27. Our resistance to \_\_\_\_ seems built in, (p.75)

### Down

1. To step out \_\_\_\_ and run our own lives again draws us, .... (Page 74)
2. Letting others share their \_\_\_\_ with us gives us hope that it does get better. (p.79)
3. When we feel trapped or pressured, it takes great spiritual and emotional strength to be \_\_\_\_\_. (p.81)
4. ...we cannot save our face and our \_\_\_\_ at the same time. (p.82)
5. When we forget the effort and the work that it took us to get a period of freedom in our lives, a lack of \_\_\_\_ sinks in, and self-destruction begins again. (p.78)
6. With the help of our sponsor or spiritual advisor, gradually we learn to trust and depend on our (two words). (p.83)
8. \_\_\_\_ can be a terribly painful area. (p.78)
9. \_\_\_\_ still leads us to make decisions based on manipulation, ego, lust or false pride. (p.77)
11. Our \_\_\_\_ tell us that we can do it on our own, but loneliness and paranoia quickly return. (p.77)
12. Unless the \_\_\_\_ that we can continue to use or stop using on our own are shattered, we most certainly sign our own death warrant. (p.76)
14. We don't \_\_\_\_ overnight. (p.77)
18. Our disease is so \_\_\_\_ that it can get us into impossible situations. (p.80)
19. \_\_\_\_ is dangerous to spiritual growth (p.81)
20. There may be times when a \_\_\_\_ lays the groundwork for complete freedom. (p.74)
21. The best way to express gratitude is by carrying the \_\_\_\_ of our experience, strength and hope to the still-suffering addict. (p.83)
22. It is better to swallow our \_\_\_\_ than to die or to go permanently insane. (p.82)

## Share the Wealth

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# NO LIFE WITHOUT HOPE

When I finally turned on that I am an addict, I realized for the first time in my life why I always felt so miserable. No matter what I did to feel a little better (e.g., excessive of shopping, sex, alcohol, and drugs) I always feel the same miserable feelings. Now you must walk through a field of lilies in slow motion embracing the feelings of an addict. Believe me I fought with all my might not to admit that I was a full-fledged addict who was totally insane. Even though I am an addict, I still wanted to live the normal life (whatever that meant). I would promise not to use drugs only if my life would be easy and smooth running. Of course, I learned early on that it doesn't work like that at all. Recovery is not a game. There is no bargaining table. Recovery for an addict like me is to learn how to live life differently. But I thought, "What could be worse than what I've done with my life so far?" So here I am, learning how to walk just like a toddler, with the help of NA showing me how to live clean. I've never dreamt in my wildest dreams that I would or could stay clean over one day, let alone staying clean over a year. That is a true miracle for an addict like me!! I sometimes sit in a daze and wonder if this is a long, long, wonderful dream, that I am free from the horrible grip of active addiction. My recovery is the most important thing in my life today because without it I have no life. This new way of life can be stressful and even confusing but I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. You see, I have hope and that is the most precious element of my life today. For an addict like me there is no life without hope and my hope centers from Narcotics Anonymous!



**RHONDA J.**

(A very grateful addict)

(Published in "the heartbeat" Mar/Apr 2008 issue)



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