



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

MAR/APR 2007

No Longer Running The Show

In this program there are no rules, only suggestions. That was one of the things that kept me coming back. I could make the choice myself whether or not to follow the suggestions and recover.

Unfortunately, at first I chose to ignore many of the suggestions. I was still trying to run my own life, and although I know that the things others suggested were good, I thought I was different. I wanted to have recovery and still run my life the way I wanted. I was very lucky that I managed to stay clean. I can only attribute that fact to the help of a Higher Power.

One suggestion someone made which I chose to ignore at first was to stay out of new relationships for a while. I rationalized that I had been seeing someone when I first came in the doors. I ignored the fact that he broke up with me just before I went to my first meeting. I came into the program to win him back. Nobody could tell me that I needed some time to get to know myself before I could have a good relationship. I thought I was different. I thought I could make it work.

The relationship lasted for two years. It came before anything else. When he quit going to meetings, so did I. I told myself that as long as I had him, and he was staying clean, I could talk to him. I told myself that it could be a daily meeting with only the two of us. I quickly became very irritable and did not work the steps. I could talk to him, but since neither of us was going to meetings, it seemed that all we did was complain about how life was treating us.

After two years, he broke up with me. The first thing I thought of was going out and getting high so I wouldn't have to face the crisis. Lucky for me, I followed the suggestions I had heard before and got on the phone. I didn't use. I got a sponsor, but again I ignored the suggestion that I get a female sponsor. For almost a year, I had a male sponsor. I told myself that, after all, I had always found it easier to talk to men. I was unable to figure out why I always felt a little guilty when someone asked who my sponsor was. Later, when I was talking to another woman in the program, I could see why that was suggested aside from the obvious possibility of developing a relationship or allowing sex to get in the way of my recovery.

She asked me if I had ever considered the possibility that one reason for the suggestion that women sponsor women was to help us get over being comfortable with other women. I had never thought of that. When she mentioned that, I realized that I needed a woman to sponsor me, so I asked her to be my sponsor. That was the best thing I could have done for myself.

Today, when someone makes a suggestion, I choose to listen. I have learned the hard way that those suggestions are there to help me. I thank God for the program and the people who keep making those suggestions, because that's what kept me clean.

Today I celebrated my third anniversary in the program. It is also the first year that I have really worked the program. Now I am really starting to recover. Today, recovery is more than abstinence. It is working the steps, listening to suggestions, and trying to improve myself with the help of a Higher Power. This program works if I work it.

My Disease Is Always With Me



The sun is shining. I feel good. I'm having a great morning and I'm feeling very confident about myself and my new found life in recovery. Then I see "her". The girl in the parking lot who is rummaging through clothes in a suitcase in the back of her car. Their car is her home. Her few possessions in that suitcase are all she has. Her clothes are baggy and dirty, her hair is a mess, yet somehow she managed to apply some make-up to her blemished face. This girl is sick and tired, but she cannot stop. This girl is an addict with a habit, bigger than she is. This girl is me.

My first thought when I see her is, "Thank God, I don't have to live like that anymore! If not for the grace of God, there go I!"

I drive away, leaving the thought of the girl and my old life behind. Five minutes down the road, listening to "Bad to the Bone", thinking I'm all cool, my head (disease) tells me ... "Yeah, it sure would be nice to use, wouldn't it? I wouldn't have to feel anything, deal with nothing. That girl's pants were so baggy and I want to be skinny again. Yep, a nice little run would do it. It wasn't that bad out there!"

I'm a sick pup. I have this disease that always wants me back. It doesn't care if I've been clean a few years. It lies to me and it will con me right back to the streets, prison or death if I let it. Thank God I know I have choices today. Thank God I admit I'm powerless over my addiction and that my life is unmanageable. Thanks to my H.P. for giving me my life back through Narcotics Anonymous. I never have to be like the girl I saw today in the parking lot, if I don't choose to. The "disease" of addiction may always try to get me, only thanks to N.A., I know it's a deceiver, liar, cheat and killer! So "just for today" I'll stick to my recovery and stick it to my disease.

Anonymous

The Newcomer Asks; "What's a Sponsor and how do I get one?"



For me, I've asked several people to be my sponsor. In the various programs I'm in, I've had as many as 12 sponsors with as many as 3 at one time. Nothing like an addict to over do it, huh? In NA, I've had only one sponsor for over a year now. Along the way to working with this sponsor I've asked the above question numerous times and had quite a bit of trouble finding the answer. I've had ones who told me what to do, how and why to do it, and even one that said only what I wanted to hear. Sometimes it seemed like it was working. My current sponsor approached it differently. He listened, shared his own experience, hope and strength.

When I'm in a place he hasn't been, he doesn't B.S. me, or try to tell me how to get out of it. He asks me how I feel, what I can do about it, and how I can apply what I've learned in the program that could help. I know I've got a long way to go, but with him I can look back on the progress I've made. He's been there when I was angry (even at him), sad and when I needed help looking at my behavior. He's helped me to work the steps and fine tune my personal recovery program.

I can only share what I have learned because a sponsor can be different things to different people. I had to try out many sponsors before finding one that works with me. Some people have had the same sponsor since the first day they came in and approached somebody. With regards to finding a sponsor, I had to swallow my pride, face my perception of embarrassment and simply ask for help. Some people stick around after the meeting; talk to the person that they think can help, develop a dialogue and then ask that person to be their sponsor. I just walked up to a person after a meeting and said "Will you be my sponsor?" Both you and the person will have a better program because of it. Your future sponsor will explain why.

Anonymous

"The Greater Hollywood Area"
&
"The Greater Los Angeles Area"
presents
"Together Again, Together We Can"
...Our real value is in being ourselves...
March 31, 2007
Meeting: 7PM | Dance: 9PM
\$10 Donation
Seventh Day Adventist Church
1711 N. Van Ness Blvd, Hollywood CA 90028

A Second Chance

It was a cold day and I was doing the same thing I've been doing for the past couple of years, looking for ways and means to get more. In no time at all I ran into this guy. Naturally, we got together and did what he had to do. Needless to say my journey into the world of addiction continued. But several other things happened as a result of that encounter. One of those things was that I made a decision to go into a detox program (I'll tell you the other thing later.)

Anyway, it was at this detox that I heard the message of recovery through an H&I meeting. All I kept hearing the speakers say was... "when you leave this facility don't pick up your check. Don't go around people, places and things. Just make a meeting." When I was released that is really exactly what I did. At those meetings I told them that I had just come out of a detox. They all shouted and clapped... "keep coming back." That was the best thing I heard all year. As I kept coming I heard things like "make ninety meetings in ninety days", "if you don't pick it up you won't get high", "look and listen for a sponsor with a year or more clean time and a working knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions".

Today I know that God works through people and that the people in the rooms loved me until I learned to love myself. Narcotics Anonymous has shown me a new way of life. The people in N.A. have shown and given me the unconditional love that I never received in the crack houses, on the stroll, or from the dealers. I love N.A. I love having somewhere to go and things to do. I love the fact that in spite of who I am, and the mistakes I may make, I won't ever get 'kicked out' of N.A. Most important of all, recovery is free. It does not cost me, (or you), one single cent to be a member.

After being in this wonderful fellowship a little over two years I am grateful for all the blessings I have received from the God of my understanding. I just want to thank the Hospitals & Institutions Committee and all the recovering addicts who were here before me to keep the doors opened.

Oh yeah! About that guy. The encounter with him was completely different from what I normally expected. Today I know that God put him in my life to rescue me from the life I was living. How did he rescue me? He was the first man in years to show me unconditional love, true love, care and genuine concern. His positive outlook and sincerity impressed me so much that I made my first positive decision. That decision was not to play this man (for a sucker). Today I am still married to him and we are both in recovery. I thank him, recovery and my HP for giving me second chance at life.

Paula G. Brooklyn, New York (Reprinted from Brooklyn Area *The Lifeline* Aug 1997)

Experience

Old behavior creates nothing
but chaos and confusion;
Thinking no harm will come is just an illusion.
Taking far less energy to tell the truth
than to tell lies;

I need to be right within myself before
I can be right in God's eyes.
Old habits are hard to break,
that I much is true;
However, to get my recovery,
it's what I must do.

This destructive behavior is what has kept me miserable for far too many years;
Self-pity and self-loathing are why
I've cried so many tears.

To rid myself of the pain I hold inside,
I must take command;

I can not deviate from my main purpose,
you'll just have to understand.

My life is on the line,
there is a lot at stake;

I realize, now,

there are some steps I must take.

Breaking rules and running on self-will
are not the way to go.

That's why I have to take suggestions
and forget what I think I know.

Sometimes my ego shows up
and what's important I forget;

One thing I do know is that

I don't want to relapse and find out my "yet".

Feeling ashamed and embarrassed
is something I wish not to savor;

It's just not worth getting caught up
in old behavior.

Take my advice and please listen well;
Learn from my experience and believe
old behavior will lead to a personal hell.

I have to be selfish about my recovery today;

Only because I see

I can live my life a much better way.

Barbara P.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1 YEAR

George W 4/23/06
 Carolyn J 4/23/06
 Devon R 4/11/06
 Carl B 3/22/06
 Madrus H 3/20/06
 Denise H 3/07/06
 Danieha B 3/01/06
 Juana G 3/01/06
 Raffie D 3/01/06

2 YEARS

Donald T 4/25/05
 Javier C 4/23/05
 Rochelle R 4/23/05
 Carla S 4/21/05
 Cheryl D 3/29/05
 Lynn L 3/22/05
 Larry W 3/18/05
 Charlotte D 3/14/05
 Donny H 3/09/05
 Bernadette M 3/05/05
 Eddie J 3/02/05
 Monica C 3/01/05
 Adrian S 3/01/05

3 YEARS

Jo-Ann L 4/27/04
 Gloria C 4/20/04
 Rodriguez A 4/15/04
 Nancy P 4/02/04
 Angela L 3/31/04
 M. Thomas 3/19/04
 Dennis O 3/17/04
 Lawrence W 3/11/04
 Diana H 3/02/04

4 YEARS

Wilfred S 4/27/03
 Renea L 4/26/03
 Sony F 4/24/03
 Michael R 4/22/03
 Enclear H 4/20/03
 Edward E 4/17/03
 Regina S 4/16/03
 Reppie M 4/14/03
 Michael B 4/09/03
 Linda T 4/04/03
 Cathy M 4/01/03
 Gerald J 3/24/03
 Renee R 3/23/03
 Karen S 3/18/03
 Curtis J 3/16/03
 Bill M 3/16/03
 Josephine G 3/14/03
 Jay J 3/11/03
 Theolia T 3/10/03

4 YEARS

Patricia F 4/19/02
 Alicija F 4/17/02
 Robert G 4/15/02
 Franchell J 4/14/02
 Charles G 4/08/02
 Robert T 4/04/02
 Dino K 4/02/02
 Alanna L 4/01/02
 Mark B 3/29/02
 Carrie D 3/28/02
 Tamika B 3/28/02
 James T 3/26/02
 Doris W 3/25/02
 Samuel J 3/24/02
 Gina C 3/23/02
 Charles S 3/21/02
 Faurice R 3/20/02
 Zack E 3/19/02
 Catherine L 3/18/02
 Ana A 3/17/02
 Becky O 3/14/02
 Ronald A 3/13/02
 Juan E 3/10/02
 Luther H 3/09/02
 Michael T 3/05/02
 Kevin J 3/01/02
 Miles S 3/01/02

5 YEARS

Toy G 4/28/01
 Juliette L 4/25/01
 Albert G 4/24/01
 Gerri Mc 4/22/01
 Debbie B 4/20/01
 Pete R 4/20/01
 Lynette P 4/17/01
 Karla H 4/16/01
 James S 4/06/01
 Al K 4/06/01
 Nicola G 4/05/01
 Wilbert B 4/04/01
 Elouise M 3/02/01

6 YEARS

Juliette L 4/25/01
 Serena M 4/23/01
 Donna H 4/03/01
 David H 4/02/01
 Debbie S 4/01/01
 John S 3/28/01
 Bobby L 3/28/01
 Tina B 3/26/01
 Alfred P 3/21/01
 Ana H 3/21/01
 Donny H 3/20/01
 Darrell L 3/16/01
 Dawn W 3/15/01
 Marvin H 3/14/01
 Rodney T 3/13/01
 Renee C 3/10/01
 Helena D 3/03/01
 Greg T 3/03/01
 Elouise M 3/02/01
 Darryl W 3/02/01

7 YEARS

Pete D 4/28/00
 Nina P. 4/19/00
 Stacy F. 4/16/00
 Felecia B 4/10/00
 Ellen F 4/07/00
 Theresa G. 4/06/00
 Sylvia R. 4/02/00
 Lisa S 3/30/00
 Warren H 3/21/00
 Karen E 3/21/00
 Sidney W 3/20/00
 Cole P 3/17/00
 John W. 3/16/00
 Charles S 3/15/00
 Ken S 3/10/00
 Willie E 3/09/00
 Michelle F 3/06/00
 Nylas L 3/04/00
 Cass Q 3/03/00
 Anthony S 3/01/00
 Cristel D. 3/01/00
 Jerry S 3/01/00

8 YEARS

Carleem E. 4/26/99
 Francine M. 4/23/99
 Doris T. 4/19/99
 Christina P 4/10/99
 Rhandi J 4/10/99
 Darla C. 4/08/99
 Cecil H. 4/06/99
 Priscilla J. 4/05/99
 Ollillian M. 4/04/99
 Linda S. 3/09/99
 Sarita G. 3/09/99
 Michael W 3/05/99
 Michael T 3/05/99
 Jerry S 3/01/99
 Joseph G. 4/01/99
 Lovanda S. 3/29/99
 Patricia R. 3/21/99
 Gwen T. 3/11/99
 Mitchell P. 3/11/99
 Tina W 3/11/99
 Linda S 3/03/99
 Steve B 3/03/99
 Willie S 3/01/99

9 YEARS

Cynthia S. 4/30/98
 Robert B. 4/23/98
 Karen G. 4/21/98
 Jackie Y. 4/15/98
 Alvin C. 4/12/98
 Robert E. 4/05/98
 Emily S. 4/03/98
 Lenore R. 4/02/98
 Bernice C. 4/01/98
 Patricia R. 3/28/98
 Mark C. 3/24/98
 Kimberly W. 3/22/98
 Richard S 3/18/98
 Rodney J. 3/16/98
 Bridget T. 3/16/98
 Sharon D. 3/10/98
 Tonie J 3/07/98
 Denise L. 3/06/98
 Robert D. 3/05/98
 James W 3/05/98

10 YEARS

Nicole J. 4/28/97
 Lionel J. 4/25/97
 Derek S. 4/18/97
 Gina R. 4/12/97
 Hal G. 4/12/97
 Reginald W. 4/07/97
 Manuel C. 4/04/97
 Tommy M. 4/04/97

Tracii P. 4/04/97
 Bill P. 4/03/97
 Debbie S. 4/03/97
 Charles K. 3/30/97
 John S. 3/29/97
 Debi M. 3/18/97
 Robin G. 3/14/97
 Keith D. 3/10/97
 Alvitars R. 3/09/97
 Zina C. 3/08/97
 Jackie B. 3/07/97
 Mark N. 3/07/97
 Bobby T. 3/04/97
 Milton G. 3/03/97

11 YEARS

Ivan M. 4/25/96
 Tommy H 4/23/96
 Tanya B 4/10/96
 Willie J 4/10/96
 Gayle J. 4/04/96
 Tracey J. 4/03/96
 Charles K. 3/30/96
 Venora S. 3/23/96
 Gathon M. 3/18/96
 Batimac 3/12/96
 Yvette N. 3/11/96
 Pam C. 3/05/96
 James H. 3/01/96

12 YEARS

Daniel T 4/27/95
 Charlene W 4/25/95
 Darryle A 4/22/95
 Philip J. 4/18/95
 Tanya L. 4/17/95
 Monroe C 4/10/95
 Earl L 4/09/95
 Dianne C. 4/02/95
 Dana B. 3/20/95
 James J 3/16/95
 Simone N 3/14/95
 Cornelius A. 3/13/95

13 YEARS

Danny T. 4/24/94
 Joe J. 4/19/94
 Scharmaine Y 4/10/94
 Keith C 3/17/94
 Renee D. 3/14/94
 Carolyn K. 3/08/94
 William H. 3/02/94

14 YEARS

Carl A. 4/27/93
 Robert C. 4/17/93
 Ragail H. 4/14/93
 Richard M. 3/04/93

15 YEARS

Barry R. 4/14/92
 Billy M. 4/04/92
 Aubrey T. 4/01/92
 Tara F. 3/31/92
 Bruce H. 3/23/92

16 YEARS

Harley B. 4/07/91
 Lynn E. 4/05/91
 Alex B. 3/15/91
 Wayne A. 3/14/91

17 YEARS

Gary G. 4/21/90
 Helen M. 4/07/90
 Renita G. 3/21/90
 Daniel W. 3/01/90

18 YEARS

Keenan G 4/18/89
 Charles C. 4/15/89
 Orenda W. 3/21/89
 Joyce C 3/20/89

19 YEARS

Tony Mc 3/19/88
 Sharleen F. 3/17/88
 Jessie J 3/10/88
 Joi F. 3/10/88
 Cedric G. 3/04/88
 Frank O 3/02/88

20 YEARS

Leon A. 4/16/87
 Pat W. 3/19/87
 Todd K. 3/17/87

21 YEARS

Lee R. 4/03/86

22 YEARS

Shareef A. 3/28/85
 Sally H. 3/11/85

35 YEARS

Smiley R. 4/28/72

Share the Wealth

the heartbeat presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The articles you see in this newsletter are written by NA members like yourself. You need not consider yourself a skilled writer. You don't have to know all the rules of grammar. We have an editorial team whose job it is to take care of those details. What we need is your unique perspective on the NA program. Without it, we don't have a message to carry. The articles and letters do not necessarily express the philosophy of NA as a whole nor does publication imply endorsement by NA, **the heartbeat**, or the Greater Los Angeles Area of Narcotics Anonymous. **the heartbeat** assumes no responsibility to return submitted material and does not guarantee that submissions will be published. **the heartbeat** reserves the right to edit any material submitted in accordance with our review policy. The policy includes but not limited to:

- Articles should be no longer than one page handwritten or typed.
- Use of NA language of recovery.
- No profanity
- No personal attacks directed towards NA members or NA as a whole.

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