

**the
heartbeat**

“The heart of NA beats when two addicts share their recovery”

JULY/AUG 2008

Exploring The Third Step

Turning my will over to God was difficult. Somehow I would put the face of my father over the face of God. I have a really good dad that provided for me, but I had a hard time connecting with him emotionally. Just didn't quite know how to do that. So when I think of God I think of God running the universe, but He's too busy doing important things to really stop and connect with me. I have a nice father, but I didn't think he really could step up and lead the family in strength and integrity. So when I thought of God as loving and caring and all that, I wouldn't trust Him with my problems. He doesn't have the power to solve all the issues that I'm facing in life. It's really hard for me to understand what it means to be a perfect father. It's hard for me to grasp God acting like a perfect Father.

It's hard for me to understand what it means to be a perfect father because I've been a father for 20 years and I make all kinds of mistakes. I try to be a great father, but sometimes there are things that I do for my daughter that I think are going to be great aren't received that way and it just has the opposite effect. I don't have a clue how to be a great father, even though I really try and do it to the best of my ability.

I wrote in my fourth step that my father never said he loved me because I've hurt him so deeply. My sponsor convinced me he always had compassion for me. He always took care of me the best way he knew how. Even through my active addiction he always took care of me. He always forgave me, even when I lost everything including my pride. He didn't care where I'd been, what I've done. He's always welcomed me home. I was his child. He didn't have to say he loves me. He showed it.

The tears started to flow. I just couldn't stop them. The tears were flowing down my cheeks as if God spoke to my heart. It really grabbed my heart because I know on the inside I'm an insecure little child. I know that so many times I try to be the man. I can overcome any problem. I can take care of any situation. But I knew deep down I'm just an insecure little child.

All those years I spent being uncomfortable because I didn't know about the character of my father. I have an understanding about being an addict. I had an understanding that I've got problems. But I didn't have any understanding that the character of my own father is a loving and caring man.

I took another look at the third step with an open mind and heart on how God expresses Himself in my recovery. I would've missed out on a lot of blessings if I hadn't. That helped me understand who God is and what He wants to do in my life. I found out my Higher Power wants to be my personal guide for living life on life's terms.

The reason I know this is because I notice a lot of men in recovery are just insecure little boys looking for daddy's approval. That's who we are. That's okay. Whenever I admit I'm just an insecure little boy, I want my daddy's approval. Just for today I can go to my daddy God and He will lift me up, hold me, hug me, and I can rest my head on His chest. I find the results far beyond my expectations.

Trust



Trust, what a concept! It's easier said than done. For me, it is a spiritual principle that dwells in my heart as faith and works in my life as action. It's easy for me to say I trust my Higher Power but is difficult to put that action in my daily life. Coming to believe in a loving, caring Higher Power has been very difficult for me.

To actually believe, that there is a power greater than myself who loves me and wants good things for me is a stretch of my imagination and belief. Good things like the ability to love and allow others to love me. Patience and tolerance that once built inside and learned can allow me security and peace. Compassion and understanding of myself and others that allows me to grasp humility. It seems that the more I exercise the spiritual principles of this program, the simpler my life and living it becomes. This is the reality that helps me trust more. The more I trust my Higher Power and what I've learned, the easier it is for me to practice spiritual principles.

As trust builds with my Higher Power I am better able to trust myself. I have a difficult time accepting that I know what the next right thing for me is. It seems I constantly question my decisions. Are they based in my will or my Higher Powers'? I know my Higher Powers' will brings me lasting joy and serenity. I often doubt that my desires are based on a "higher consciousness", i.e., Higher Power consciousness. I fear that one poor decision will wreck my life and it will all be my fault. I know these unrealistic fears show a lack of faith and trust.

One tool I am learning is to discuss my decisions with those in the program I have come to trust. Uh oh! There's that word again. Trusting others is another area that is hard for me. I must believe that the person I share with is trustworthy. If I learn to share a little of myself with someone and then see how that person treats that part, I only risk getting a little hurt if their trust is not warranted. Once I find a person or persons who will honor that little piece of me, I can share a little more. I can be sure that if someone treats another person's trust lightly, they will probably treat mine the same. This is one way I can overcome the very self-destructive pattern of trusting the "wrong" people.

Before I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous I trusted people for unhealthy reasons. Most of the people I trusted were as self-centered as I was. Of course they usually had their best interest in mind and could only base decisions on unhealthy, self-destructive behaviors (like me). This enabled me to continue my own self-centeredness. It was no wonder I felt I knew what was best for me. Now, looking back, I see where my best got me, a self-centered character built on defective beliefs and unhealthy behaviors. I was sure that there was no one I could trust, that everyone would let me down, it was me against the world. I believed that anything I confided in someone could and would be used against me it was just a matter of time. My weaknesses and confidences would be thrown in my face sooner or later. I couldn't even trust my family!!

Today I try to base my beliefs closer to reality. Reality for me today is to look back over my life since I have been clean. Today, my behaviors are guided by the spiritual principles of this program, to the best of my ability. My faith and trust build as I see the benefits that these beliefs and behaviors bring into my life. Even though trust has been and will continue to be a difficult issue for me, I have the willingness to continue to move forward in my program and in my life.

Without the program of Narcotics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps and spiritual principles incorporated in it, I would remain a prisoner of my fear and the distrust that accompanied it. Before I came to Narcotics Anonymous, I could not see that I had choices, today I can choose not to live in my unhealthy fear. Today I can learn to live a happy, joyous, and free life, trusting that my Higher Power will guide my footsteps. I will make mistakes, but as long as I stay in recovery, I don't choose to make the same ones again and again. I know that my loving, caring Higher Power will never let me down. My Higher Power has always been with me and as long as I choose to listen for guidance it will be given.

Cathy M.

Free to Soar



I used to be afraid to feel for I was scared at what might happen. Then I came to believe I was incapable of feeling. For these misperceptions I punished myself. I used to be afraid to look inside for fear of what I might discover. I used to avoid... I used to avoid facing my void. I never shared the shame I felt. I was even ashamed of *that*. So, I continued to punish myself. I continued to numb and anesthetize any glimmer of genuine emotion. I had created a reality where I hated who I'd become yet was imprisoned with no way to escape. I truly believed I was alone, and even for that I punished myself.

Now when I look inside and see evidence of my life's events with neutrality, I see a gash across my heart – but it's not painful. It is no longer fresh but is an old wound deprived of any attention. It was ignored for a very long time. But my heart is so strong that it did a remarkable thing and adapted. The gash is now a beautiful, interesting part of my heart. The gash *invites* me to take a closer look. The gash reminds me that it is a mark of who I am and where I've been. It adds color and intricacy to my human experience. As I learn to love the gash it is beginning to heal.

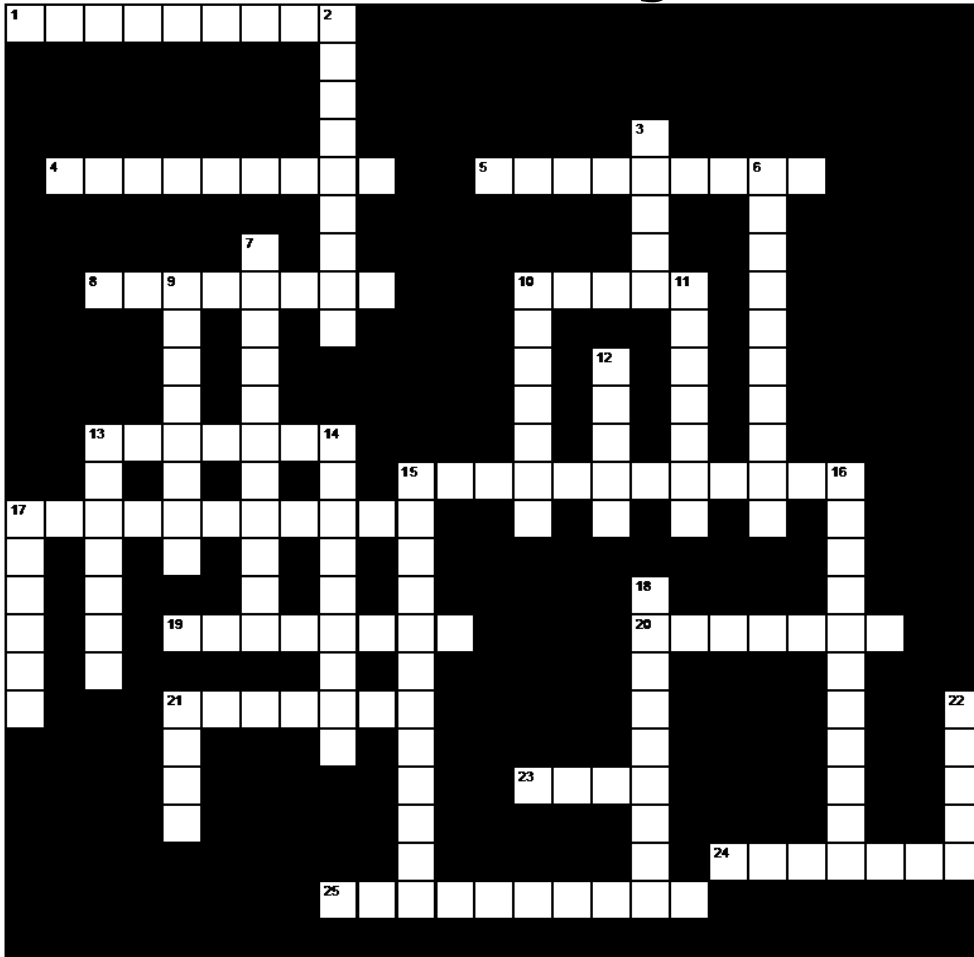
Today, fear does not stop me from moving forward on my journey. Today, I know how to pray! Today, I am willing and I am guided in my recovery. Today, I forgive myself. I know that I am not, nor ever was my behavior. Defining myself by what was uninformed. I recognize now that I am a spiritual being having a human experience. I was doing the best I could even before I believed those words. Today, I am doing the best I can. Today, my perception of reality is less limited by fears, self-criticism and judgments. Today, I make different choices. Today, I have compassion for myself.

Today, I embrace my humanness as I am awakening to my Divine Nature. It was always there, just obscured by layers of judgment and fear. Today, I accept what is. And so, today, I am free to soar. Today, I am unafraid to discover who I am. I know that my Higher Power has got my back. Because of my relationship with God I know that who I am today can handle whatever comes my way with grace.

I know that I am never alone.

Beth F.

H.O.W Recovery Puzzle



It would be tragic to write [out an inventory only to] shove it in a **(17 down)**. *Basic Text P31*

These defects grow in the **(21 down)** and die in the **(3 down)** of exposure. *Basic Text P31*

Our real value is in being **(1 across)**. *Basic Text P101*

Although **(11 down)** is difficult to practice, it is most rewarding. *Basic Text P92*

We have been **(20 across)** at self-deception and rationalization. *Basic Text P27*

When we feel trapped or pressured, it takes great **(14 down)** and **(5 across)** strength to be honest. *Basic Text P81*

A symptom of our disease is **(6 down)**, and honest sharing will free us to recover. *Basic Text P80*

Everything we know is subject to revision, especially what we know about the **(12 down)**. *Basic Text P91*

When we honestly tell our own story, someone else may **(19 down)** with us. *Basic Text P95*

This is a program for **(8 across)**. *Basic Text P16*

(4 across) is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. *Tradition Twelve*

Our disease has been **(9 down)**, and now anything is possible. *Basic Text P102*

We become increasingly **(25 across)** and open to new ideas in all areas of our lives. *Basic Text P102*

A new **(23 across)** cannot be grafted onto a closed mind.... Open-mindedness leads us to the very insights that have eluded us during our lives. *Basic Text P93*

Today, we seek **(2 down)**, not problems. *Basic Text P55*

There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of **(15 down)** or **(7 down)** toward spiritual principles. *Basic Text P18*

We have learned that it is okay to not know all the **(13 across)**, for then we are **(18 down)** and can learn to live our new life successfully. *Basic Text P93*

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.... Either go on as best we can the bitter ends—**(22 down)**, **(15 across)**, or **(10 across)**—or find a new way to live. *Basic Text P84*

When someone points out a **(16 down)**, our first reaction may be defensive....(but) if we truly want to be free, we will take a good look at input from fellow addicts. *Basic Text P35*

Our **(21 across)** has been arrested, and now anything is possible. We become increasingly open-minded and open to new ideas in all areas of our lives. *Basic Text P102*

“...I was ready to go to any **(24 across)** to stay clean.” *Basic Text P217*

We... get a good look at what these **(10 down)** are doing to our lives. We begin to long for freedom from these defects. *Basic Text P33*

We wanted an easy way out....When we did seek help, we were only looking for the **(13 down)** of pain. *Basic Text P5*

Our disease always resurfaced or continued to progress until, in **(17 across)**, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous. *Basic Text P13*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1 YEAR

Darleen C 8/23/07
Anton M 8/20/07
Sharon B 8/20/07
Lillie O 8/18/07
Annamarie L 8/11/07
Darryl M 8/11/07
Durrell C 7/26/07
Annie C 7/20/07
Iris H 7/20/07
AC 7/20/07
Patricia B 7/18/07
James B 7/14/07
Traci M 7/12/07
Dyann P 7/07/07
Robert M 7/04/07
Ron P 7/02/07

2 YEARS

Larry S 8/28/06
Latanya C 8/27/06
Bill W 8/26/06
May S 8/22/06
Karl A 8/21/06
Gwen B 8/18/06
Joe J 8/07/06
Timothy S 8/01/06
Derrick M 7/25/06
Donna R 7/15/06
Yvette G 7/11/06
Blanche J 7/07/06
Diana H 7/05/06
Leroy Y 7/04/06
Tim S 7/01/06

3 YEARS

Francisco S 8/16/05
Beverly G 8/15/05
Willie L 8/05/05
Donald M 8/05/05
LaNecia J 8/03/05
Jay B 7/17/05
George T 7/11/05

4 YEARS

Darryl G 8/19/04
Rhonda T 8/14/04
Enrique L 8/08/04
Latanya H 8/07/04
Erwin T 8/06/04
Robert R 8/05/04
Felix P 8/05/04
Kevin P 8/04/04
Alphonse W 8/03/04
Herman A 8/03/04
Al W. 8/02/04
Myra P 7/28/04
Rosemary 7/23/04
Paula R 7/16/04
Kimberly T 7/06/04
Yvette W 7/01/04

5 YEARS

Shantea S 8/29/03
Janet W 8/26/03
Jessie G 8/24/03
Lee J 8/18/03
Winnetra C 8/18/03
Rick G 8/11/03
Samuel S 8/10/03
Claudia C 8/06/03
Mesha H 8/04/03
Stephen L 8/04/03
Rufus W 8/03/03
Felecia B 8/01/03
Elizabeth W 7/31/03
Gary C 7/26/03
Kenneth M 7/19/03
Ollie B 7/19/03
Lynn T 7/18/03
Barbara M 7/16/03
Tyronne M 7/12/03

Kenneth M 7/11/03
Morgan E 7/08/03

6 YEARS

Derek T 8/25/02
January S 8/23/02
Cynthia C 8/23/02
Linda H 8/20/02
Jerry K 8/14/02
Kimberly T 8/12/02
Gwendolyn D 8/09/02
Gregory W 8/07/02
Marlon G 8/07/02
Nicole G 8/06/02
DeAndre T 8/06/02
Brenda B 8/06/02
Debra B 7/26/02
Ana N 7/25/02
Djakhangir A 7/25/02
Rhonda C 7/22/02
Serena C 7/17/02
Rachelle B 7/16/02
Andrea R 7/15/02
Ricky T 7/10/02
Willie R 7/07/02
Bobby M 7/04/02
Maurice C 7/01/02

7 YEARS

Ivan T 8/31/01
Sharon Y 8/17/01
Charles J 8/15/01
Sharon R 8/14/01
Paris P 8/09/01
Henry P 8/09/01
Brian P 8/07/01
Dana K 8/05/01
Cynthia S 8/01/01
LaNette B 7/30/01
James T 7/22/01
Wali W 7/19/01
Celanese T 7/17/01
Howard W 7/16/01
David H 7/15/01
George S 7/11/01
Margaret W 7/08/01
Tammy C 7/06/01

8 YEARS

Vaughn H 8/30/00
Patricia C 8/29/00
Raymond L. 8/24/00
Earl G 8/18/00
Scott P 8/16/00
Rhonda T 8/14/00
Tyra T 8/13/00
Eddie B. 8/12/00
David W. 8/09/00
Denise C. 8/08/00
Vaughn H 8/08/00
Matthew M. 7/31/00
Belinda V 7/31/00
Belinda W 7/30/00
Marvin H 7/28/00
Elizabeth D. 7/25/00
Tone A 7/24/00
LaCretia E. 7/22/00
Earl G. 7/18/00
Doreen S 7/10/00
Sarah H. 7/06/00
Shirley R. 7/05/00

9 YEARS

Eddy L. 8/31/99
Lisa T 8/20/99
Laura M 8/20/99
Susan G 8/17/99
Billie S. 8/13/99
Robert B. 8/11/99
Richard J. 8/05/99
Remona J. 8/03/99
Glen C. 8/03/99

Greg J. 7/26/99
Sheila T. 7/16/99
William J. 7/05/99
Charlotte T. 7/2/99

10 YEARS

Mary S 8/30/98
Johnny N. 8/24/98
Larry W. 8/22/98
Alvin J. 8/19/98
Maria K. 8/10/98
Aaron R. 8/09/98
Artimus J. 8/07/98
Sonia B. 8/07/98
Cliff S. 8/01/98
Jezette B. 7/30/98
Charlotte F. 7/27/98
Joe S. 7/15/98
Marcus M. 7/13/98
Angelus W. 7/12/98
Kenneth K. 7/05/98
Faith A. 7/04/98

11 YEARS

Catherine C 8/23/97
Mark B. 8/21/97
Linda H. 8/19/97
Patricia W. 8/09/97
Jonathan J. 8/09/97
Stephanie M. 8/08/97
Christopher H. 8/02/97
Tracie H. 7/26/97
Taryn G. 7/26/97
Ronald R. 7/24/97
Jackie T. 7/24/97
Rebecca L. 7/16/97
Alma E. 7/15/97
Ricky W. 7/11/97
Linda M. 7/10/97
Nina L. 7/10/97
Jamaine W. 7/02/97

12 YEARS

Michele S 8/19/96
Cynthia G. 8/12/96
Stephanie M 8/08/96
Yvonne F. 8/06/96
Della H. 7/25/96
Dana S. 7/24/96
Phyllis H. 7/23/96
Tracy R. 7/17/96
Jamal J. 7/15/96
Rosalind R.W. 7/14/96
Kermis H. 7/09/96
Alicia H 7/04/96

13 YEARS

Chuck M. 8/27/95
Patricia H 8/15/95
Kim W. 8/14/95
Billy B. 8/10/95
Elliot B. 8/10/95
Keenan M. 8/08/95
Saundra M. 8/04/95
Sandra A. 8/01/95
Robert B. 8/01/95
Vickie Jo D 7/10/95
Yolanda G. 7/10/95
Gary H. 7/07/95

14 YEARS

Diamond 8/23/94
Margaret T. 8/18/94
Valerie J. 8/17/94
Latricia B. 8/12/94
Trish C 8/12/94
Conrad R. 8/08/94
Harvey C 7/29/94
Camille T. 7/24/94
Nina L. 7/10/94
Kenn T 7/05/94
Paul W. 7/01/94

15 YEARS

Roy M. 8/31/93
Debbie B. 8/17/93
William F 8/16/93
Fredrika P. 8/15/93
Juana B. 8/15/93
Daryl J. 7/24/93
Danny H. 7/23/93
Keith L. 7/22/93
Willie M. 7/12/93
Ricardo W. 7/09/93
Arlisa B. 7/07/93
Candace V. 7/03/93

16 YEARS

Tommy C. 8/26/92
Debra F. 8/04/92
Charles H. 7/24/92
Ron R. 7/24/92
Bessie L. 7/23/92
John B. 7/11/92

17 YEARS

Derwin J. 8/19/91
John C 7/23/91
Michael A. 7/19/91
Carole B 7/12/91
Willie H. 7/09/91

18 YEARS

Ted B. 8/09/90
Michele L. 8/01/90
Michelle B. 7/28/90
Brooks W. 7/26/90
Mary J. 7/16/90
Ellen H 7/16/90

19 YEARS

Linda H. 8/28/89
Mark D. 8/13/89
Maria K 8/10/88
Ron S. 7/25/89
Marlene E. 7/16/89
Terri L. 7/12/89

20 YEARS

Malik H. 8/12/88
Sharon A. 7/19/88
Johnny P. 7/07/88

21 YEARS

Gerald C. 8/12/87
Vanessia K. 8/04/87
Phillip B. 7/18/87
Mike M 7/10/87
Rikki J. 7/09/87
Floyd J. 7/07/87

22 YEARS

Cheryl B. 8/27/86
Don M. 7/24/86
Rhonda T 7/05/86
Diana H 7/05/86

23 YEARS

Frank P 8/16/85

24 YEARS

Travis S 8/16/84
Jimmy Lee 7/12/84

26 YEARS

Dawud B. 8/26/82

35 YEARS

Alex L 8/24/73

47 YEARS

Bob B. 8/12/61

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. 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** 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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