



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

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Making Amends To Mom

It took several years clean before I was truly ready to make amends to my mother. Like many of us, I came to Narcotics Anonymous spreading the blame quite liberally, so that none fell upon me. And Mom was an easy target. I grew up poor, with my Mom trying to raise four kids on a waitress salary. My childhood was transient, at best. I was often sent off to the care of the State, as readily as some kids are sent off to summer camp, as well as to my Fathers, Aunts, Cousins and whoever else would take me in. I noticed quite quickly that it was me, and not any of my siblings, who always had to play the “moving game”. Although it had never been voiced, or even spoken about, my natural assumptions as a child was that I must be “the bad one”.

As an adult, I shrugged it off to “just being the hand I was dealt”, and functioned within the family unit as “the scapegoat”, the one that was set apart. I wasn’t able to see how much it had affected me until I had gotten clean and, through working with a sponsor, began working steps 8 & 9. I was so blinded by “what was done to me” that I couldn’t even see what I had done to her. I wanted answers DAMN IT! ...and I didn’t think it was fair that I should ask her for forgiveness while letting her off the hook.

Like a said, it took years for me to come to a place (spiritually) where I could approach my Mom and own my part without any expectation. When I did, I literally stuttered and stammered through my words without making much sense, until my Mom just came out and asked me if “I was apologizing for being such an asshole”. I simply smiled and said “Yeah”. We hugged and chatted for awhile when all of the sudden my Mom broke down into tears. She began to apologize for not being a good mother and for always sending me away. She explained how hard it was for her to make ends meet on her own with four kids and how difficult it was to make those choices. She told me that I was the one that always got sent away because she believed that I was the only one who would be able to handle it.

I had gotten two great gifts from this experience:

- 1.) I was able to recognize an ongoing pattern in my life; when I don’t have all of the information available I have the tendency to “fill in the blanks” with my own stuff (And my stuff isn’t the best stuff to be filling in the blanks with).
- 2.) By approaching this Step with a sincere desire to be forgiven, I was blessed with the opportunity to forgive... And I did!

ANONYMOUS

I Finally Surrendered

My name is Jay K. and I am an addict. My history proves that. I got clean on October 9th, 2008. I was out there using for like 30 years.

Let me tell you a little about myself. I was 28 in 1991 and I stuck a .38 in my mouth. I was drinking and using a lot. I was feeling very despondent and I wanted to go to the other side. In reality I was killing myself. I was in my garage where I used to build Harleys. I planned it for 4 1/2 months. I never told anyone. I wanted to die and experience what being dead was all about. My girlfriend and I had been fighting. I was crying when I shot myself. I remember I was praying for God to help me. I woke up after 105 days in a coma and had about a year and 1/2 of therapy to learn how to walk and talk again.

After that the disease was alive and growing and I continued to use. It got worse and worse. There were many arrests and lots of jail time.

I reached a point where I could no longer use. I figured this is just not working the way I had expected things to be or turn out. I got so tired of paying the consequences. I became willing to take some suggestions. I would get 30 or 90 days clean and then I would go out and use again. I have been in a number of programs. I got something out of every one of them. Through my addiction, I experienced a lot of frustration, guilt, remorse, confusion and shame (*"I used to live and lived to use."*)

Then I was sent to my last program. There my recovery began. I was willing to take a sponsor, work the steps and become of service. I began speaking on Hospital, & Institution panels. I even volunteered at some organization that feeds the homeless.

I now have 3 commitments in Hollywood. I did like 230 meetings within my first 90 days. I've got a wonderful sponsor. In NA, I found the love that I thought I would never find. It is just one day at a time. It's a simple program; spiritual not religious. (I'm not anywhere close to being well. I take a look at what part I played any situation and accept it as being what life is.) Sometimes life just shows up with some trying times, but now, I have the tools of recovery to understand and work through to make better choices. And with those choices I make my life so much better than what my choices were before.

I feel happy, joyous and free today. I can go into any meeting and not feel any anxiety, confusion, loneliness or fear about the way other addicts think about me. I just accept it. I feel a lot of love in the meetings.

(I finally surrendered) to the process. And there isn't anything I can't get through using my spiritual tools I am learning in NA.

Thank you Hollywood NA.

You Forgot Your Journey

Hey, the newcomers are taking over! Have we old timers forgotten our journey? What it took for us to get here?



Newcomers seem to have forgotten, too by disrespecting their predecessors with their "I don't give a damn attitude". Did we teach them that?

I don't know about you but I can't forget the horrors of this disease. I remember my first commitment and I would never stand in the way of an addict who is just simply trying to get another day clean. Do we benefit from gossip and tearing one another down?! Where's the compassion? Have we forgotten what it took to get where we're at? How can you sleep after damaging the heart of someone who's been through the storms of the disease?

I guess it's true what they say about this disease: it's selfish in nature and after that, it becomes self-centered and it even makes you forget about your journey to NA. Or do you just like talking at the lecturer???

Kelly

Greater Los Angeles Area
DOPEBUSTERS

12th Annual Tribute to the Old Timers

One Promise, Many Gifts

Saturday, January 22, 2011

MIJ DropIn Center 11152 So. Main, LA

Meeting from 7-10 pm
Dance from 9:30 pm - 1:30 am
\$7 Dance Donation
\$3 recovery homes & court cards

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Step 7: An Act Of Humility

I got clean in 1994. I was eighteen. N.A. said that any addict could stay clean, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. That theory has been put to test for the last fifteen years of my life and still holds true today. There have been some no matter what's in the past fifteen years. Thank God for the steps and sponsorship.



In 1998, I was going through a divorce and it was a very painful time for me. I had never walked through any real kind of pain and this was one of those times. My son was two years old at the time and I was staying with family. I was a factory worker and was coping with my ex-wife moving on and becoming involved with a friend of mine. I felt alone and angry. I had been through the steps before but now I was having to actively apply the principles in the steps to my life.

I was getting my son for visits every other weekend. My weekend was coming up and I called my ex to coordinate when I would pick him up that weekend. She was resistant and wanted him to stay with her for the weekend. I was in the midst of a shift at work when I called and I could hear her boyfriend/my friend in the background telling her that it wasn't my weekend and that they were going to keep him. I was enraged by his comments. I couldn't believe that he would get involved and I wasn't going to stand for it. I hung up the phone and found my supervisor and told him I was leaving for the rest of the night. He said ok. I was in such a rage when I got into my 1995 pick up truck. In my mind I wanted to kill them both with my bare hands. All I could think of was kicking the door in and strangling them both. At the time I was body building and weighed 215 pounds. I was very strong and knew I could do it. I was in my truck doing 120 miles an hour on a highway with a 45 mile an hour zone. I was blacked out with rage. In the midst of this I said "God, help me." I picked up my cell phone and called my sponsor, Dave. He answered and I told him I was going to kill two people and that he should know in case I called to be bailed out of jail.

Along with the help of my sponsor and another recovering addict, I avoided a shortcoming that could have altered the rest of my life and others.

There is a practical way of practicing the 7th step. One of the things that I was taught is that there will be a moment of grace when I get to choose how I behave. That moment is like a fork in the road when one chooses their direction at any given moment. Working the 7th step is an act of humility. I knew that of my own power I could not make clear decisions on my own. I learned that in early recovery when I wanted to use and called someone to talk me back down to earth.

This was another moment when I was at a fork in the road and the best I could do was call my sponsor and tell him that I was about to commit a double homicide.

I got to their house and turned the door handle to find it unlocked. I walked through the house seething looking for one of them to appear. There was no one home. My sponsor had called them and told them to get out of the house before I got there. Needless to say, I was disappointed. I didn't know what else to do so I went to visit a good friend of mine. He was a tattoo artist and he was working at his shop. As soon as I walked through the door and saw him, tears streamed down my face. All my pain and fear washed over my face and he held me like a baby.

That moment of grace that comes in the 7th step once again saved my life. Along with the help of my sponsor at that time and another recovering addict, I avoided a shortcoming that could have altered the rest of my life and others. Instead of falling short of principle, I was given a moment of clarity that helped me on the path of self acceptance and forgiveness. I was able to pause long enough for a Higher Power to work in my life. Thank God for N.A., sponsorship, and the steps. They have been guiding me on a path of recovery for fifteen years now.

Vince P.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



1 YEAR

Joe C 2/27/10
 Cara S 2/23/10
 Linus A 2/20/10
 Melonie A 2/10/10
 Darryl C 2/07/10
 Louie H 2/05/10
 Ruben O 2/03/10
 Stephanie O 2/01/10
 Michael S 1/28/10
 Cristian M 1/27/10
 Schonol C 1/05/10
 Cindy D 1/04/10
 Miles 1/02/10
 Stephen M 1/02/10
 Rashid M 1/01/10

2 YEARS

Raymond B 2/24/09
 Ramon D 2/22/09
 Gene D 2/19/09
 Alicia M 2/17/09
 Patricia L 2/16/09
 Lunesa W 2/12/09
 Debbie B 1/24/09
 Crystal Y 1/12/09
 Deborah S 1/09/09
 Tracy B 1/04/09
 Ron G 1/01/09

3 YEARS

Lisa G 2/25/08
 Gene D 2/20/08
 Ronnie P 2/12/08
 Keith M 1/26/08
 Herman R 1/15/08
 Lionel J 1/13/08
 Pam K 1/09/08
 Gary W 1/04/08

4 YEARS

James E 2/14/07
 Rick F 2/13/07
 Maurice C 2/11/07
 May S 2/05/07
 Leslie L 2/02/07
 Merlin C 2/01/07
 Wesley M 1/27/07
 John J 1/24/07
 Tyra M 1/24/07
 Mark T 1/22/07
 Conell P 1/21/07
 Emmit L 1/17/07
 Darren P 1/11/07
 Rashid M 1/06/07
 Sandra S 1/05/07

5 YEARS

Debra M 2/22/06
 Edris H 2/19/06
 Cynthia M 2/13/06
 Patricia T 2/11/06
 Tina W 2/08/06
 Lloyd W 1/31/06
 Keica D 1/31/06
 Trisha G 1/29/06
 Charles Y 1/11/06
 Don M 1/06/06

6 YEARS

Fredrick M 2/25/05
 Donald C 2/23/05
 Lorris J 2/23/05
 Terri M 2/08/05
 Keith R 2/08/05

Daryl W 2/02/05
 Isaias A 2/02/05
 Patrice G 1/23/05
 Clyde B 1/15/05
 Garnel C 1/12/05
 April B 1/12/05
 Linda M 1/10/05
 Randall P 1/01/05

7 YEARS

Armond G 2/17/04
 Ronda B 2/24/04
 Theresa A 2/08/04
 Terry N 2/08/04
 Sharon B 1/31/04
 Anthony M 1/23/04
 Darryl H 1/21/04
 Tyra M 1/20/04
 Samuel L 1/16/04
 Denise L 1/07/04
 Rodney N 1/01/04

8 YEARS

Shirley J 2/27/03
 Sandra D 2/15/03
 Ennis B 2/13/03
 Barbara G 2/07/03
 Maria G 2/07/03
 Henry H 2/04/03
 Patrice S 1/29/03
 Patricia F 1/19/03
 Javier C 1/17/03
 Eric H 1/15/03
 Frank T 1/15/03
 Brenda G 1/13/03
 Eddie B 1/06/03

9 YEARS

Taylor L 2/28/02
 Marsha E 2/25/02
 Oscar W 2/20/02
 Rosa S 2/18/02
 Tobias R 2/11/02
 Leticia A 2/05/02
 Melissa H 1/29/02
 Charles B 1/25/02
 Raheem R 1/23/02
 Sheila H 1/19/02
 Yvonne E 1/18/02
 Fred W 1/08/02
 Debra S 1/06/02

10 YEARS

Melvin G (last name omitted) 2/26/01
 Carmen D 2/24/01
 Ernie W 2/14/01
 Hillary P 2/12/01
 Claudia E 2/05/01
 Stanley W 2/05/01
 Andre M 2/02/01
 David W 1/24/01
 Debra D 1/24/01
 Pam M 1/19/01
 Sabrina S 1/18/01
 Linda R 1/17/01

11 YEARS

Antoinette D 2/19/00
 Juan Carlos 2/19/00
 Bea Z 2/16/00
 Yvette J 2/10/00

Birdsong P 2/10/00
 Robert T 2/10/00
 Lee Mc 2/04/00
 Sandra R 1/27/00
 Alexander S 1/11/00
 Ronald T 1/09/00

12 YEARS

Leah T 2/27/99
 Mark C 2/24/99
 Carmen D 2/24/99
 Carri M 2/19/99
 Robert T 2/10/99
 Rhonda J 2/09/99
 James G 2/09/99
 Mia 1/31/99
 Evelyn J 1/25/99
 Colin C 1/20/99
 Carolyn B 1/15/99
 Jim G 1/11/99
 Debra H 1/08/99
 Veronica M 1/06/99
 Marc N 1/04/99
 Linda B.K 1/04/99
 Carolyn B 1/03/99
 Orlanda W 1/03/99

13 YEARS

Tommy S 2/10/98
 Claudia M. 2/07/98
 Bo H 2/05/98
 Lewis H. 2/02/98
 Gwen B 2/18/98
 Freddie H 2/18/98
 Shelly J 2/12/98
 Camilla D 1/26/98
 James L. 1/24/98
 Tammy I. 1/23/98
 Brenda J. 1/21/98
 Lorna M. 1/20/98
 Dwight N 1/14/98
 Kenneth B. 1/16/98
 Marva P. 1/09/98
 Anthony T 1/08/98
 Patrick J. 1/05/98
 Sherry M 1/01/98

14 YEARS

Carl J. 2/26/97
 George T. 2/21/97
 Daniel R. 2/15/97
 Michael P. 2/12/97
 Maggie B. 2/12/97
 John F. 2/11/97
 Cece F. 2/11/97
 Troy R. 2/07/97
 Martha S. 2/03/97
 Gerald T. 1/18/97
 Yolanda M 1/14/97
 Kevin B. 1/12/97
 Joseph B 1/02/97

15 YEARS

James H. 2/29/96
 Anthony W 2/27/96
 Nate T. 2/21/96
 Lewis S. 2/13/96
 Margo M. 2/03/96
 Jerry B 2/02/96
 Tabitha O 1/22/96

Rod P. 1/13/96
 Deborah F 1/11/96
 Albert T. 1/08/96
 Lisa D. 1/03/96
 Karen S. 1/02/96

16 YEARS

Earl L 2/28/95
 Karen A. 2/03/95
 Sheila K. 1/31/95
 Frank S. 1/24/95
 Dan O 1/22/95
 Sharron S 1/10/95

17 YEARS

Johnny B 2/21/94
 Henry C. 2/13/94
 Aaron A. 2/11/94
 Sophia H 2/10/94
 Robert E. 1/09/94
 Sherry B. 1/03/94
 Eleanor P. 1/02/94

18 YEARS

Lynette P. 2/19/93
 Regina H 1/25/93
 Donald B 1/19/93
 Dwayne P 1/15/93
 Lisa H 1/11/93
 Andrew R. 1/05/93
 Shelly W. 1/04/93

19 YEARS

Lisa G. 1/22/92
 Melissa P. 1/22/92
 Toni B. 1/14/92
 Darryl J 1/13/92
 Akbar 1/08/92
 Yolanda J 1/03/92

20 YEARS

Leonard H 1/23/91
 Kim M 1/20/91
 Veronica S 1/17/91
 Everett G 1/14/91

21 YEARS

Bruce L 2/13/90
 Faheem P. 1/05/90

22 YEARS

Gary J. 2/23/89

23 YEARS

Leonard L. 2/25/88
 Yolanda F. 2/23/88
 Lester L. 2/15/88
 Rodney C 2/11/88
 Veronica L. 1/19/88
 Tracy D. 1/21/88

24 YEARS

Todd K. 2/17/87
 Mitzi W. 1/31/87
 Henry B. 1/13/87

25 YEARS

Ricardo M 2/25/86
 Tyrone B. 1/24/86

28 YEARS

Clarence W. 2/04/83

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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