



the heartbeat

MAY/JUNE 2011

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

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 3

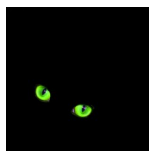
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I RECEIVED THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

My name is Warren H. and I'm an Addict. Had it not been for a particular symptom of my disease, and my seeking it out, I might not have ever realized I had a disease. I see people every day who suffer from the disease of addiction, obsessive & compulsive behavior operating on self-will but because they don't use drugs (a symptom of the disease of addiction) they don't think they're sick. Some of them know something is not right but they just can't seem to figure out what's wrong. They go to head shrinks, they run to the church, they try a lot of different stuff to fix what they think is wrong. Some are successful at getting better; others keep on living in insanity, never getting a clue. I was one of those people who suffered from the disease long before I picked up my first drug. You see, drugs didn't make my life unmanageable, drugs made my life unbearable. My life was always unmanageable for as long as I can remember. When I finally did pick up that first drug it was like going from H.I.V. to full blown AIDS, it was the beginning of the end. I sought help in treatment after drugs kicked my behind so bad I didn't want to live anymore and that's where I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous. I began to learn about this disease from which I suffer, how it's centered in my thinking, and selfishness is at the root of this disease. I can't thank God enough for introducing me to N.A.

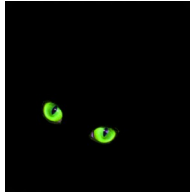
I used to think I was a bad person trying to be good but could never pull it off. In N.A., I have learned that I'm sick & today I'm getting better one day at a time. Today I live The N.A. way, I live by the spiritual principles that are intrinsic to the Twelve Steps of N.A. & are the culmination of the process of recovery. I never imagined that I could stop using drugs and find a new way to live. The Program of Narcotics Anonymous works if you let it. I had to learn that the hard way. I came to the rooms of N.A. back in 1988 and I stayed drug free for eight years. But like it says in our literature, there's a huge difference between resignation and surrender. I was resigned to the fact that I was an addict but didn't accept recovery as the solution to my problem therefore I didn't surrender to the process of recovery, I didn't get a sponsor or do any writing, wouldn't follow any directions, didn't

practice any spiritual principles. I used recovery at my convenience. I believed I was ok. Eventually my self-will separated me from the fellowship and I found myself caught in the grips of the disease one more time. This time it was so strong that I even though I knew there is a better way to live, I still couldn't will myself to come back into recovery. I made a couple of attempts to come back but wasn't ready yet. It wasn't until January 02, 2010 that I surrendered to the fact that without recovery, I would surely die from this disease called addiction. Nothing I tried worked, then in a moment of clarity I remembered I still hadn't tried the program of N.A. as it is outlined in the Basic Text. By God's grace and mercy, as well as a willingness to go through this process, come January 02, 2011, I will be clean one year.

The quality of my recovery in just one year is ten times greater than the eight years I was drug free. Today I have a sponsor who has a sponsor who has a sponsor. I'm in the process of writing my inventory in the 4th step, I go to meetings regularly, I'm a G.S.R., I have a home group, I call other addicts everyday but most importantly I have a God of my understanding who I practice turning my will & my life over to one day at a time. In the Third Step our literature says, "There is a spiritual progression from hope to faith to trust. As we begin Step Three, we carry with us the sense of hope that was born in us as we worked the Second Step. Hope springs from the knowledge that our life is full of possibilities----there are no hard certainties yet, just the first whispers of anticipation that we just may be able to fulfill our hearts deepest desires. Lingerin doubts fade as hope becomes faith. Faith propels us forward into action. We actually do the work that those we have faith in are telling us is necessary if we are to achieve what we want. In the Third Step, faith gives us the capacity to actually make a decision and carry that decision into action. Trust comes into play after faith has been applied. We have probably made significant progress toward fulfilling our goals. Now we have evidence that we can influence the course of our lives through taking positive action."

My sponsor told me that this is the receiving of keys to the kingdom. I'm forever thankful to God for getting me clean and to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous for showing me a new way to live.

THE DARKNESS



Using was my only way out of the guilt, fear, humiliation, and shame. Those were some of the darkest things in my life. Because I'm an addict, I felt I had no way out. I put my trust in my Higher Power (God) to guide me, but I couldn't feel my way through to a better way of life during my addiction. My days were dark and my nights were darker. Even when there was sunshine there was always a dark cloud over my head from the guilt of using drugs.

One day I woke up I guess and God told me something needs to change because I was sick and tired of doing what I was doing. That's when I checked into a treatment facility and through their program I began to see the light of hope. For that I'm grateful.

I continued to go to meetings. I got a sponsor. I was also told to get into the work and through my sponsor that's what I'm doing. Today, I'm learning to love myself and apply spiritual principles in my life. I'm so grateful for Narcotics Anonymous and my new found friends.

Thanks for helping me save my life.

Tammy C.

Take my will and my life.
Guide me in my recovery.
Show me how to live.

The Child Within

Something I found very helpful in NA Recovery along with working the steps, working with a sponsor and being of service is self Parenting. The process of self discovery allowed me to get in touch with an inner child. He usually surfaces when I am in fear or have expectations. I recognized him to be a selfish, self centered little brat. It became apparent he was more ego than spirituality.

Always wanting to be in control and avoiding responsibility are among his favorite games to play. He needed to be lovingly taught how to grow up. This can be a difficult process much like trying to pet a fearful, wounded animal. Patience and tolerance eventually allowed me to lovingly caress the child within and reassure him that everything is as it should be.

Making amends was another part of the healing nurturing process because kids often don't understand "I'm sorry" or "I'll never do it again." They seem to understand their obvious pain and feelings of betrayal. Intuitively and instinctively they regress into behavior patterns that have worked in the past such as manipulation and tantrums.

"An old dog can be
taught new tricks but
time and effort are
necessary"

Parental responsibility requires patience and tolerance even for the kid inside. An old dog can be taught new tricks but time and effort are necessary. Parents should provide loving guidance and playtime for a healthy, happy, well rounded child. Too often we forget to provide this for the child within us and, consequently, he expresses himself in anger.

If we look inside ourselves and find a child, reach out to him, tell him of your love for him and caress him as you always wanted to be caressed and you may find yourself crossing into love of self. Such a love may give you a new perspective on how to love others.

"C"

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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Step Four

I I guess you can say that my experience with the fourth step has been pretty much like the rest of the steps; a journey. The way that I worked my first fourth step is nothing like the way I worked my second one and probably will not be the same way I work my next one. The important point has been that I've worked them and what I was supposed to find out, I found out.

What was taught to me was that in order to do a fourth step I had to practice the spiritual principle of honesty. In the practice of my disease I was never able to be honest, at least never about myself, and it was through honesty that I have been able to see myself as I actually am.

My first attempt at writing a fourth was probably similar to many other addicts. I wanted to tell you how everyone had wronged me, what was wrong with everyone else and how I had the answer to all of life's ills. Needless to say I found no relief or growth through this method, but was fortunate to have a sponsor who lovingly suggested that I take a look at my own part of the picture. The results were truly miraculous. It was as if I had uncovered a new person. By being able to practice the principle of honesty, I was able to release all the blaming I had held on to for so many years.

This process was not very comfortable though. I went through some very yeechy feelings and remember feeling like a rotten person many times. Again I was fortunate to have a sponsor to reassure me that what I was uncovering was neither horrible nor irreversible. I was told that the feelings would not kill me, no one ever died from a feeling, and that what I was experiencing was actual spiritual growth.

Where the fourth step has taken me today is amazing. Whenever I am willing to practice honesty, I always uncover the truth and I am always set free.

Toni L.

WHO IS AN ADDICT?



I am an addict, and I am powerless over my addiction." The many and varied faces of addiction appear in all the facets of my life. Everything I "use" to "fix" what "I feel" inside of me becomes my addiction. A different face for a different ploy.

Drugs in the form of alcohol, PCP, toluene, heroin, weed, uppers, downers, and pills, produce dramatic changes in the way I feel. These are obvious ways to fix me. Some aren't so easily noticed. Such as materialism, prestige, sex, power, food, and emotional drama. The list is long. And all the paths are the means to a dead end.

As an addict, I am always searching for that certain 'something'. Something to fill the void. That hole I feel in my soul. Is it genetic...or environmental? Maybe a little too much on the radiation side? An evolutionary mutant? Or am I just out of my mind?

The questions don't really matter anymore. Whatever the 'reasons', there is a solution. For me, as an addict, the solution is N.A. and its twelve steps of recovery. N.A. deals with addiction. No matter what face addiction wears; with the twelve steps. I can reclaim my life. With the twelve steps, addiction can be arrested and recovery is then possible.

I am an addict and I believe.

by Raymond A.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



1 YEAR

Barney C 6/24/10
 Andre H 6/23/10
 Rodney W 6/22/10
 Michele G 6/22/10
 Brian H 6/15/10
 Gena T 6/08/10
 Tim R 6/06/10
 Jon C 5/28/10
 James M 5/27/10
 Debra S 5/26/10
 Melissa R 5/11/10
 Eric L 5/05/10
 Dunia S 5/04/10
 Daniel S 5/04/10

2 YEARS

Nick P 6/30/09
 Lamont D 6/12/09
 Lisa H 6/10/09
 Joaquin L 6/08/09
 Gerald G 6/02/09
 Myron R 5/27/09
 James B 5/26/09
 Angelia H 5/18/09
 Gabriela R 5/15/09
 Da'Marion H 5/12/09
 Anita B 5/02/09
 Anna F 5/09/09

3 YEARS

Youlonda G 6/27/08
 Stefani R 5/30/08
 Regina N 5/29/08
 Darryl M 5/29/08

4 YEARS

Jerome "Lifetime" W 6/24/07
 Candice B 6/23/07
 Amy H 6/22/07
 Rodney B 6/22/07
 William 6/20/07
 Teresa R 6/13/07
 Blackie R 6/13/07
 Orlando V 6/10/07
 Vinson T 5/28/07
 Rian A 5/25/07
 Reggie M 5/22/07
 Kenton B 5/10/07
 Mary R 5/08/07

5 YEARS

Oletta W 6/20/06
 Robin F 6/18/06
 Joann L 6/16/06
 Veronica R 6/16/06
 Jessie B 6/08/06
 Carolyn D 6/08/06
 Joseph C 6/06/06
 Bertram S 6/04/06
 Lawrence R. 6/01/06
 Larry L 5/26/06
 Mayra Z 5/26/06
 Patris J 5/23/06
 James K 5/11/06

6 YEARS

Edwin C 6/28/05
 Gwendolyn G 6/27/05
 Mildred B 6/14/05
 Beverly W 6/14/05
 Michael P 6/13/05
 Katherine J 6/08/05
 Erika D 6/08/05
 Tami E 6/06/05
 Sabrina S 6/04/05
 Angelia H 6/01/05
 Linda L 5/28/05
 Tandria J 5/21/05
 Jackie F 5/12/05
 D'Zondra M 5/10/05
 Michael A 5/05/05
 Rene B 5/01/05

7 YEARS

Sally V 6/28/04
 Chere W 6/28/04
 Randi B. 6/24/04
 Nedra F. 6/22/04
 Janice R. 6/17/04
 Sherrri S. 6/15/04
 Sandy C. 6/10/04
 Portia S. 6/09/04
 Don M. 6/08/04
 Claude Ray C 6/08/04
 Terri K 6/05/04
 Jennifer B. 5/26/04
 Barbara W. 5/24/04
 Sydney S. 5/24/04
 Carolyn W 05/24/04
 Lisa B.T. 5/24/04
 Lolisa M. 5/19/04
 Diana T. 5/18/04
 Yortia S. 5/15/04
 Eunice D. 5/14/04
 Steven B. 5/05/04
 LaTuandra A. 5/03/04

8 YEARS

Gail C 6/23/03
 Margarita L 6/18/03
 Larry R. 6/12/03
 Derrick J 6/10/03
 Ozell G 6/10/03
 Larry H 6/09/03
 Lee T 6/05/03
 Lonzo D 6/04/03
 Jennifer L 6/01/03
 Albert R 5/25/03
 Sony F 5/24/03
 Cynthia-Marie 5/22/03
 La Keisha M 5/20/03
 Kamran A 5/20/03
 Deborah J. 5/12/03
 April H 5/08/03
 Calvin P 5/07/03
 Eddie D 5/07/03
 Tony H 5/02/03

9 YEARS

Gary M 6/27/02
 Liam F. 6/24/02
 Nancy P. 6/18/02
 Wilbert B. 6/11/02
 Michelle D. 6/10/02
 Yvonne H. 6/08/02
 Judy K. 6/05/02
 Bobby M. 6/04/02
 Michael C. 5/28/02
 Steven M. 5/25/02
 Michelle F. 5/24/02
 Wanda J. 5/24/02
 Cassandra C. 5/21/02
 Annette T. 5/20/02
 Melissa R. 5/16/02
 Earlene P. 5/14/02
 Darla T. 5/14/02
 Richard S. 5/11/02
 Cassandra C. 5/07/02
 Bernie C. 5/07/02
 Shawatha J. 5/06/02
 Stephanie R. 5/01/02
 Louie G. 5/01/02
 Michael C. 5/01/02

10 YEARS

Angela J. 6/28/01
 Robert J 6/21/01
 Jonathan J 6/21/01
 Howard W 6/16/01
 Roland M 6/15/01
 Rudy M 6/12/01
 Phyllis E 6/05/01
 Angela J 5/26/01
 Tanya T 5/25/01
 Keith S. 5/23/01
 Eliza R 5/23/01
 Vanessa R 5/22/01
 Jim-Bo 5/21/01
 Myrtis H 5/15/01
 Tangee S 5/08/01

11 YEARS

Brenda JS 6/06/00
 Nathan S. 6/02/00
 Karl D. 5/27/00
 Tamika T. 5/27/00
 Keith S. 5/23/00
 Eliza R. 5/23/00
 Jackie E. 5/23/00
 Scott S. 5/10/00
 Roxanne M. 5/09/00
 Lamont H. 5/08/00
 Pamela G. 5/05/00
 Anne T. 5/02/00
 Alfreda B 5/02/00

12 YEARS

Roger W 5/28/99
 Geraldine A. 5/17/99
 Lynne B. 5/17/99
 Timothy W. 5/11/99
 Sama O. 5/09/99
 Yvette M. 5/05/99
 Phil R. 5/04/99
 Suzanne A. 5/03/99
 Andemia S. 6/23/99
 Haneef S. 6/19/99
 Shaheed 6/19/99
 Edward K. 6/12/99
 Sabrina S. 6/11/99
 Joyce H. 6/10/99
 Lorenzo B. 6/07/99
 Roger W. 5/28/99
 Keisha G. 5/25/99
 William S. 5/25/99
 Zadie A. 5/23/99
 Nellie A. 5/23/99
 Valerie N. 5/20/99

13 YEARS

Patricia D. 6/28/98
 Ruby 6/24/98
 Deanne S. 6/14/98
 Dennis J. 6/11/98
 Valerie H. 6/10/98
 Gerald H. 6/09/98
 Patricia P. 6/06/98
 Jacqueline W. 6/04/98
 Deborah H. 6/02/98
 Curtis C. 6/01/98
 Roger W. 5/28/98
 Monica H. 5/27/98
 Toney W. 5/22/98
 Marlene L. 5/18/98
 Jackie Y. 5/15/98
 Marian G. 5/14/98
 Jessie T. 5/13/98
 Clarence M. 5/12/98

14 YEARS

Sheldon S. 6/19/97
 Dennis J. 6/11/97
 Elizabeth S. 6/10/97
 Steven W. 6/09/97
 Judith F. 6/08/97
 Diane L. 6/06/97
 Anthony B. 5/31/97
 David R. 5/27/97
 Valerie W. 5/24/97
 Ronald S. 5/23/97
 Ruthie R. 5/20/97
 Mike C. 5/13/97
 Leonard D. 5/13/97
 Cynthia S. 5/13/97
 Deborah L. 5/08/97
 Leonard G 5/05/97

15 YEARS

Nais L. 6/20/96
 David W. 6/18/96
 Heidi V 6/18/96
 Jessie 6/14/96
 Beatrice M. 6/06/96
 Telisia P. 5/31/96
 Michael B. 5/31/96
 Tracy M. 5/29/96
 Catherine B. 5/24/96
 Mary Ann C 5/20/96

15 YEARS

Ava M. 5/18/96
 Donald F. 5/17/96
 Barbara S. 5/17/96
 Leonard G. 5/05/96
 Tracey J. 5/03/96

16 YEARS

Patricia C. 6/15/95
 Ray B. 6/06/95
 Tracy A. 6/01/95
 Tanya C. 6/01/95
 "NA Ray" A. 5/18/95
 Jerome G. 5/16/95
 Annie L. 5/14/95

17 YEARS

Patrice L. 6/21/94
 Hakeem C. 6/20/94
 Maricela E. 6/15/94
 Marva H. 6/07/94
 Forrest R. 6/07/94
 Charlotte C. 5/21/94
 Roshan G. 5/20/94

18 YEARS

Particia C. 6/15/93
 Winfred B. 6/11/93
 Charles C. 6/09/93
 Almata C. 6/08/93
 Glaspie V. 6/07/93
 Penny H. 5/24/93
 James A. 5/17/93
 Showers A. 5/12/93
 Roxanne T. 5/10/93

19 YEARS

Ronnie J. 6/29/92
 Anthony M. 6/24/92
 Linda K. 6/23/92
 Barbara M. 6/15/92
 Keva B. 6/14/92
 Patsy W. 6/10/92
 Denny 6/03/92
 Toni S. 6/01/92
 Juanita G. 5/20/92
 James B. 5/16/92

20 YEARS

Simeon F. 6/31/91
 Sadiq 6/24/91
 Jaywan W. 6/23/91
 Kenny T. 6/21/91
 Blanche R. 6/17/91
 Marcia E. 6/14/91
 Patsy W. 6/10/91
 Za Ellen 6/10/91
 Ora H. 5/29/91
 Steven W. 5/21/91
 James S. 5/13/91
 Helen J. 5/10/91
 James W 5/05/91

21 YEARS

Rodney E. 6/15/90
 Tyrone B. 6/03/90
 Charles W. 5/23/90
 Michael C. 5/07/90

22 YEARS

James M. 6/05/89
 Terry A. 5/29/89
 Khadijah S. 5/05/89

23 YEARS

Percy A. 6/17/88
 Joetta W. 5/20/88

24 YEARS

Ken G. 6/05/87
 Michael W 5/31/87
 William S 5/21/87
 Guy W 5/10/87

26 YEARS

Jerry H 6/20/85

27 YEARS

Virgil M 6/04/84

28 YEARS

Slo Ed 5/03/83

30 YEARS

Jan W 5/07/81

35 YEARS

Janis E. 6/29/76