



the best of **heartbeat** **VIII**

SEP/OCT 2011

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

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Is Like-
How He Cares**



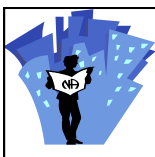
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Strength Through Unity

When I first came to recovery I felt alone--not "a part of " for a long time. Even at big meetings, dances and other clean events, I felt a great deal of loneliness. I can remember that after being here well over a year, people still didn't my name!

I later learned that I was just playing the sidelines and not truly being an involved member of the Greater L.A. Area of Narcotics Anonymous. I was too busy introducing people person I imagined I was...that person I had made up in my head, while continuing to isolate the person I really was, who is different from the me I met after doing some work .

Once willing to let the mask down, made a decision to no longer play the sidelines, and to truly participate my recovery, I started to feel the true importance of unity. And, through unity I was able take my recovery to another level. A level I've never before reached.

For the first time in my life, felt accepted and part of! ALL AT THE COST OF JUST BEING ME!! I found out that there are people who had been down some of these same roads. I found out that I wasn't alone. Ito believe that my God works through people, and that by tapping into the spirit of unity, help became possible.

Unity is a must. I understand that concept today. Stronger relationships develop as we become more involved in each others lives. The care and understanding born of these relationships are strong threads in the in the fabric of unity. If there was no unity there would be no "We"! Each of our steps start with "We" or has We as the subject.

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My Last Night

I was scared, afraid that dark forces were out to get me. Huddled up on my bed, I cried as I scanned the shadows for the slightest hint of movement. And then, as the first rays of bright sun poked through the dusty, closed Venetian blinds hanging in my bedroom window, I had a revelation, a true spiritual epiphany. It was me. I was the dark force...and I needed to be stopped if I was to survive.

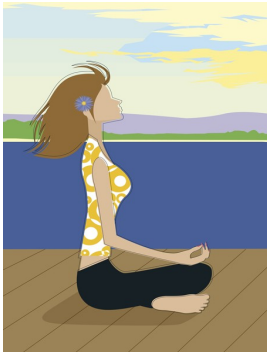
I heard my mother rustle to life from her room across the hall from mine and knew what I had to do. It took every ounce of willpower and courage I had left to call her name. My voice was small and cracking. She entered my bedroom still dressed in her nightgown. "Ed, what is it?" Her voice was fearful. "Mom, I need help. I'm...I'm hooked on cocaine and booze. I can't stop and I don't know what to do. I need you to help me. Please help me."

There was a long pause. I looked into her eyes as if I was a small child who had skinned my knee. I needed her. "Stay right there," she finally said, softly. She turned, leaving me sitting on my bed still dazed from last night's heavy using. I heard her open one of her dresser drawers. It sounded like she was rummaging around for something. For what, I had no idea.

My mother returned holding something in her hands. "Here, I want you to have these," she said. I held out my hands and took possession of a large unfamiliar coin and a small red leather bound book. "These were your grandfather's. Look at them." I did as I was told. The book was the New Testament. On the inside an inscription read "To Ed, Rejoice!" I was named after him and he had passed away when I was ten years old. I idolized him. The inscription was dated 1977, the year I was born. Choked up, I looked at the coin.

The coin was a seven years of sobriety marker from
(Continue on page 3)

What my Higher Power is like — how He cares...



My Higher Power is subtle; my disease is loud and rude. My disease says because my Higher Power is subtle and gentle, that means He lacks power, but that's the trick of my disease. My Higher Power is bigger and stronger than my disease. My Higher Power is trustworthy and faithful. He communicates. My Higher Power is a gentle spirit.

I remember my God at my bottom. I remember when I was walking down the street bankrupt, mentally insane, physically decayed, and spiritually empty; I had a real tough void going on. I had nothing left. My disease had taken so much from me, but God's voice; his spirit spoke to me, and for the first time in months I listened. He told me to go get help, to stop using, and I would be alright. I felt this in my soul. He cared. I stayed clean for four days then went into treatment; treatment is where I got introduced to Narcotics Anonymous. I remember how my Higher Power kept me in the meetings. Every time I was in a meeting, He was there. He cared.

I remember when the treatment van had left me. I remember when my Higher Power came back and picked me up for my first NA convention. I'm so glad the van didn't leave. At the convention I got to meet so many other addicts just like me. I felt at home. He cared. All the times I was in pain, I couldn't see a better way. When I was in the grip of my disease, my Higher Power always held me in the rooms, He has always shown up. He cares. He knew all the things I would go through in my recovery. He knew me before I knew myself. He loved me before I could love myself. He has always worked through others in NA. He has always wanted a relationship with me. My Higher Power has always wanted me to stay. He has always desired to guide me. He cared and cares. He was always there when I did wrong. He was there when I was insane; He gave me my surrender. My Higher Power is the one who restored me. He cares.

My Higher Power was there through all my hurts, always there in the midnight hour. He's just a Prayer away. He was there to share in all my accomplishments and joys. He cares. He was there to help me parent my children in my active addiction, and helped raise them in my recovery. Yes! My Higher Power cares. He has been there in sponsorship. He put my sponsor in my life. He works through her. God is always there in our process. He has helped us grow, and He develops our friendship. I love her. She believes in NA to the fullest and I still want what she has 9 years later. God I thank you for her, for sponsorship; my Higher Power cared and cares. My Higher Power has worked in my family relationships. In recovery I was able to become friends with my Mom again, and influencing recovery in her life. He cares.

My Higher Power has built friendships in my life with my sisters in recovery, and others in recovery. He's taught me about friendship. He cares.

He has been a provider and a protector. God has always had a good plan for my life. He has been with me through each of the 12 Steps. Teaching me each principle. He is the principle! I learn. God has given me each and every awakening. I've been able to teach through His love. I've learned how to be a sponsor sharing my pain, experience, strength, and hope. He helps me to continue to grow. I'm his little "Tea Cup" God changes me in the Seventh Step. He cares.

He mends my heart, helps me through pain and fear, and helps me to surrender my defects. God holds my grandbabies and my family who is out of state. He has been the strength behind me and the man in my life – to be able to have a relationship; he has guided us. He put my guy in my life. For that I'm grateful. God has truly shown out in my life. It is my desire to continue my relationship with my God on a deeper level, so I can hear Him better. To keep learning that I have to let go, and I'm worthy! Knowing I'm OK. Thank God for the opportunity to live to be free. I told you, He cares.

Thank you, Lester for being in my life; for caring enough to continue to send me the NA Newsletter (the Heartbeat) for all these years. I really enjoy it. Thanks for giving back, and especially thank you for blessing me with your candles.

Love you lots, Trish

(Reprinted from Nov Dec 2007)

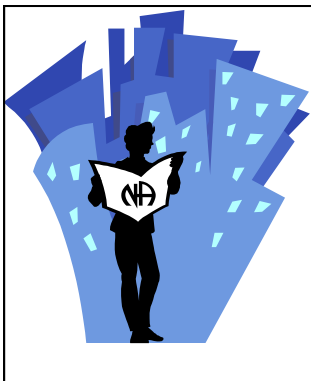
Surrender and Hope

I tried my way for many years,
Knowing that the program works in spite of my fears.
Went to lots of meetings in the beginning and ended with a few,
And always did what I wanted to do.
His or her suggestions were giving to me,
I was deaf to the information and principals I couldn't see,
My anger kept me locked inside my own mind,
Instead of moving forward my brain was on rewind.
Trapped by the bugaboos of my past,
Uncomfortability on my inside kept me running fast.
My guilt, shame, and infidelity kept my life on pause,
While my disease cheered me on with an insidious applause.
Resentment, low self-worth,
and forgiveness were the captains of my ship,
Used by my disease to plan my chaotic trips.
Whooped into submission I finally gave in,
To live this program I can no longer pretend.
With help from God, my sponsor and NA friends,
This terrible cycle can come to an end.
Although before it's been hard to cope,
But with surrender and willingness I know for me,
there's hope.

Winton H.

(Reprinted from HB Jan Feb 2009)

Living on Skid Row



I first went down on Skid Row in the year 1975 just after leaving my first program in recovery. I must tell you that I truly thank almighty God for bringing me through this "snake pit" (as we use to call it back in the day). I've learned some of the most memorable lessons in life, and the will to survive against all odds.

In was in this snake pit where I learned how to rob, steal and inject all kinds of drugs into my body. I lived in missions, abandoned hotel rooms, and cars. I went to jail so many times, including state prison up north, that I really didn't think I was ever going to make it back home again. It was only through the grace of God that I made it out. But as soon as I came back to LA, I picked up right where I left off. I really hadn't changed enough so that I could leave the drugs, fast money, fast women and the drama that came with them, alone.

Long after my release from prison, I realized I could no longer control the use of any drugs, including the wet drug. My life turned into a living nightmare. Everyday I was caught up in the powerful grip of addiction with no way out. I had tried programs before, just to get healthy and to keep from going to jail. About this time I was really messed up in the head from drugs, and I knew I had lost my mind. I mean I was totally gone.

On September 9, 1990, I walked a few blocks to a treatment center and it was there that I finally surrendered my life over to the care of a loving, merciful God. It was a treatment center that had the only Narcotics Anonymous meeting on Skid Row. An H&I panel would come every Saturday for two hours, and that is where I first met my sponsor. The panel would come and tell us in their own words exactly what NA has done for them and how NA was changing their lives for the better. I saw the glow in their eyes whenever they shared from the heart. I saw for myself that this was what I wanted for myself. So I went to outside meetings, like at the Doctor's Hospital on Western Ave, Arlington and Adams, 4920 Avalon, 52nd and Western, MJB Drop-In Center, and the House of Uhuru. I really liked the marathons and conventions.

There are meetings now on skid row every day of the week. I think we have somewhere around sixteen on the frontline of our disease. I truly thank God for all He has done for NA and for me.

Wesley R.

(Reprinted from HB Mar Apr 2002)

Strength Through Unity

(continued from page 1)

It takes unity to start a meeting. It takes unity to keep a meeting going. And, it takes unity for sponsorship. Unity is the key to the therapeutic value of our fellowship—one addict helping another. We all play a part the well being of Narcotics Anonymous. We act on our part through service, working together as One in the spirit of unity!!!!

Vindell B.

(Reprinted from HB Mar Apr 2002)

My Last Night

(continued from page 1)

Alcoholics Anonymous. There was an inscription on one side reading, "To Thine Own Self Be True." I looked up to my mother who at this point had started to cry. "Your grandfather got sober when you were born," she said. "He did it for you." I felt tears forming in my eyes. She went on. "You keep this coin and you return the favor. You need to help yourself, Ed. No one else can do it for you."

One year later I was as far from that dark smelly bedroom in Philadelphia as I could be. Standing in front of a podium facing over three hundred people, I addressed the crowd assembled on a hot, sticky Monday night in Hollywood, California. "My name is Ed and I am an addict." "Hi Ed!" was the audience's reply. I recounted for the crowd the tale of the coin. And then, I looked down at my mother seated in the front row. Her face was beaming. "Mom, I've waited a whole year to say this to you. You gave me something and told me I needed to help myself. Now tonight, I want to thank you for helping me become my own man. If it wasn't for your love and support, I wouldn't be able to give you this."

I dug in my pocket and retrieved a shimmering silver one year Narcotics Anonymous coin, my first. As I left the podium to hand the coin to my mother, the audience erupted into joyous applause that thundered through the darkened auditorium. Staring into my mom's eyes I saw a familiar look. It was the same one I had seen exactly a year before: one of love. This, my first year of recovery, was for my mom. The years to come are for me, one day at a time.

Ed M.

(Reprinted from HB Jan Feb 2008)



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



1 YEAR

Jason S 10/26/10
 Valoria R 10/25/10
 Edie 10/21/10
 Kim T 10/18/10
 Stefanie M 9/24/10
 Sergio C 9/21/10
 Cece B 9/13/10
 Gabriel H 9/02/10

2 YEARS

Necole E 10/20/09
 Sandrine L 10/19/09
 Stephanye D 10/14/09
 Bellinda J 9/27/09
 Kenneth B. 9/21/09
 Syvette S 9/21/09
 Beverly G 9/11/09
 Stephanie R 9/05/09
 Stacey W 9/03/09
 Reubener P 9/01/09

3 YEARS

Mary L 10/29/08
 Gonzalo R 10/27/08
 Andrew R 10/25/08
 Tammy C 10/22/08
 Edythe F 10/17/08
 Talia S 10/17/08
 Michael B 10/17/08
 Rick m 10/15/08
 Juan Z 10/13/08
 James E 10/13/08
 Barbara W 10/11/08
 Tandria J 10/07/08
 Maricela S 10/07/08
 Calvin C 10/05/08
 Anthony V 10/05/08
 Simone S 10/04/08
 Charles J 10/04/08
 Wanda Mc 10/03/08
 Rene R 10/03/08
 Mike K 10/02/08
 Nathan H 9/24/08
 Emma L 9/23/08
 Verdia E 9/20/08
 Gloria F 9/14/08
 Brent H 9/09/08
 Robert M 9/02/08

4 YEARS

Antoinette K 10/31/07
 Lorraine T 10/31/07
 Ricky C 10/22/07
 Angela G 10/18/07
 Toni M 10/24/07
 Darlene W 10/12/07
 Raquel M 10/11/07
 Lorraine H 9/26/07
 Keith W 9/26/07
 Jeffrey S 9/26/07
 Ulysses Mc 9/25/07
 Kemia G 9/19/07
 Kevin P 9/18/07
 Jabril M 9/16/07
 Joy W 9/14/07
 Yolanda G 9/12/07
 Stephanie G 9/11/07
 Lorena M 9/11/07
 Peter S 9/11/07

5 YEARS

Wayne W 10/28/06
 Betty H 10/18/06
 Patricia R 10/17/06
 Debbie S 10/09/06
 Marvin W 10/08/06
 Tatia G 10/07/06
 Sherree K 10/02/06
 Lennie W 10/02/06
 Johnny P 9/26/06
 Forrestine G 9/23/06
 Tony J 9/20/06
 Theodore P 9/19/06
 Ruthie W 9/16/06
 Laura G 9/13/06
 Shawn M 9/11/06
 Jay C 9/10/06
 Courtney W 9/09/06
 Delano D 9/07/06

Kim M 9/06/06
 Tommy W 9/03/06
 Thalese T 9/01/06

6 YEARS

Michele S 10/17/05
 Kimberly H 10/17/05
 Trina N 10/16/05
 Leslie S 9/29/05
 Leslie S 9/25/05
 Ray S 9/24/05
 Angela T 9/14/05
 Margarita S 9/01/05

7 YEARS

Ruel G 10/26/04
 Athena T 10/12/04
 Yolanda M 10/09/04
 Gwendolyn J 9/21/04
 Gwen D 9/21/04
 Mark H 9/16/04
 John T 9/16/04
 Paule V 9/11/04

8 YEARS

Georgia A 10/20/03
 Nina M 10/10/03
 Alsandori B 10/08/03
 Roosevelt Y 10/06/03
 Ronnie B 10/04/03
 WB (I luv NA) 10/03/03
 (Yeah Yeah Yeah)
 Patricia M 10/03/03
 Donny S 10/02/03
 Trevan L 9/25/03
 LaShawn Mc 9/22/03
 James R 9/20/03
 Darrell L 9/20/03
 Sonia D 9/15/03
 Sara C 9/05/03

9 YEARS

Gary C 10/12/02
 Leslie S 10/11/02
 Kahlid A 10/11/02
 Vance D 10/10/02
 Robert R 10/07/02
 Roosevelt Y 10/06/02
 Angelus W 10/05/02
 Khisas J 10/04/02
 Lance 1 10/03/02
 Debra J 9/30/02
 Adrian D 9/29/02
 Cynthia B 9/28/02
 Franco S 9/27/02
 Charles D 9/26/02
 Rachel P 9/23/02
 Treavor S 9/21/02
 Laura G 9/20/02
 Mechelle A 9/20/02
 Danny T 9/15/02
 Elizabeth M 9/04/02
 Nicole G 9/04/02
 Deandre T 9/04/02

10 YEARS

Angelo M 10/04/01
 Dave L 10/03/01
 Denise H 10/02/01
 Treavor S 9/21/01
 Dana M 9/19/01
 Kofi S 9/17/01
 Wendell M 9/11/01

11 YEARS

Victor B 10/29/00
 Micacha S 10/29/00
 Sandy M 10/28/00
 Steve S 10/27/00
 Diana W 10/25/00
 Timothy J 10/25/00
 Viola P 10/25/00
 Wilford K 10/22/00
 Jacqueline J 10/19/00
 Leroy M 10/18/00
 Joi R. 10/15/00
 Walter B 10/12/00
 Jesse P 10/07/00
 Carlos R 10/05/00
 Audry H 10/04/00
 Hugh B 10/03/00

Iida P 10/01/00
 Jeanene S 10/01/00
 Darryl C 9/26/00
 Dana W 9/25/00
 Karen L 9/18/00
 Nicholas C 9/17/00
 Connie S 9/13/00
 Willie C 9/13/00
 Pamela R 9/10/00
 Rocky W 9/08/00
 Robert H 9/07/00
 Kim M 9/06/00
 Jennie A 9/06/00
 Byron C 9/04/00
 Alfi P 9/03/00
 Rosalind F 9/03/00
 Thomas P 9/03/00
 Duane B 9/01/00
 Kasey H 9/01/00

12 YEARS

Milton B 10/30/99
 Sandra W 10/30/99
 Tina L 10/23/99
 Zina L 10/23/99
 Mando A 10/21/99
 Sonia G 10/17/99
 Kevin L 10/15/99
 James AC 10/13/99
 Kelly W 10/11/99
 Rosetta T 10/03/99
 Todd Z 9/13/99
 Clarence B 9/12/99
 Yvette Q 9/09/99
 Jim Y 9/07/99
 Patrice S 9/02/99

13 YEARS

Johnnie W 10/31/98
 Pamela Jo 10/30/98
 Sheila M 10/28/98
 Mike W 10/28/98
 Michael B 10/23/98
 Wanda T 10/20/98
 Yolanda B 10/19/98
 Karen B 10/19/98
 Wayne T 10/15/98
 Leta H 10/13/98
 Vera P 10/11/98
 Sharon P 10/10/98
 Willie B 10/08/98
 Kimberly P 10/06/98
 Victor M 10/05/98
 Richard B 10/4/98
 Ramon L 10/02/98
 Sonia C. 10/01/98
 Rhonda J 9/21/98
 Debra O 9/25/98
 Lucretia G 9/15/98
 Wesley W 9/15/98
 Bianca L 9/03/98

14 YEARS

Teresa W. 10/31/97
 Grace F 10/29/97
 Clinton 10/23/97
 Addie W 10/20/97
 Ronald W 10/16/97
 Andrew T 10/15/97
 Sheila B 10/10/97
 Hasan B 10/09/97
 Cheryl D 10/08/97
 Michelle W 10/07/97
 Kim P 10/06/97
 Seawillia A 9/27/97
 Richard O 9/23/97
 Willie C 9/18/97
 Kenneth H 9/16/97
 Ricky L 9/09/97
 Johnny K 9/01/97

15 YEARS

James E.G. 10/30/96
 Marlise H 10/28/96
 Myrtle W 10/25/96
 Delena Z 10/21/96
 Katherine W 10/21/96
 Jas K 10/17/96
 Julie R 10/17/96
 Sandra S 10/11/96
 Gus A 10/10/96
 Diane K 10/09/96
 Lem W 10/09/96
 Ellisio G 10/04/96
 Ella H 9/28/96

Curtis T 9/27/96
 William O 9/23/96
 Adolphus M 9/23/96
 Luis H 9/21/96
 Kenneth H 9/16/96
 Robert A 9/04/96

16 YEARS

Kathryn H 10/26/95
 Michelle C 10/26/95
 Jeffery S 10/11/95
 Jackie W 9/21/95
 Jerome M 9/08/95
 Wali 9/01/95

17 YEARS

Shonda W 10/31/94
 Brenda T 10/22/94
 Tunyshia S 10/13/94
 Silvia F 10/12/94
 Tommy D 10/12/94
 David M 10/11/94
 Kathryn A 9/26/94
 Ruth S 9/24/94
 Marcella "Diva" Mc 9/23/94
 Margie P 9/22/94
 Gloria B 9/12/94
 Brenda S 9/08/94

18 YEARS

Jackie J 10/14/93
 Pauline G 10/04/93
 Stan J 10/03/93
 Tracy H 9/06/93
 Raymond M 9/04/93
 Overstreet 9/01/93

19 YEARS

Andrea A 10/19/92
 Steve S 10/13/92
 Richard T 10/03/92
 Janette H 9/23/92
 Nate S 9/19/92
 Sherene A. 9/09/92
 William E 9/01/92

20 YEARS

Earl F 10/07/91
 Kirby S 9/25/91

21 YEARS

Daphnie B 10/25/90
 Paula L 10/16/90
 Maurice R 10/15/90
 Helen S 10/07/90
 Phyllis W 10/07/90
 Azell M 10/02/90
 Tinka M 9/14/90
 Wesley R 9/12/90
 Darryl B 9/03/90

22 YEARS

Doc J 10/23/89
 Gregory G 10/09/89
 Beth S 10/05/89
 Julia S 9/06/89
 Anita S 9/05/89

23 YEARS

Tommie P 10/15/88
 Craig C 10/02/88
 Johnnie D 9/19/88
 John K 9/19/88
 Erskine W 9/06/88

24 YEARS

Sheila B 10/10/87
 Irene V.M. 9/22/87
 Michael S 9/12/87

25 YEARS

Ted S 10/23/86
 Stephanie S 10/13/86
 Yo Steve 9/16/86
 West 9/10/86
 Patricia P 9/04/86

26 YEARS

Earl D 9/09/85
 Cheryl Mc 9/08/85

27 YEARS

Jay A 10/28/84
 Pam J 9/24/84

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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