



the best of heartbeat VII

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

Trapped Behind a Wall of Complacency

"If, after a period of time, we find ourselves in trouble with our recovery, we have probably stopped doing one or more of the things that helped us in the earlier stages of our recovery." Basic Text, p. 92

Thank God it's not my job to make sure Narcotics Anonymous keeps going because no one would get and stay clean.

For the first year of my recovery, I was on the pink cloud. I did everything my sponsor told me to do. I went to 90 meetings in 90 days, I got commitments, and I was of service to our area. After I took that cake for 1 year, I thought I had arrived. I thought it was time to take care of business and make up for the time that was lost during my using years. I wanted to get that good job, lose that weight, find that meaningful relationship, and clear up the financial wreckage of my past. "Surely, if I use the tools I've learned, I will be able to accomplish these goals." I told myself. So, I went at it full throttle. I filled my schedule with work, the gym, and the relationship. I didn't know it at first, but I was putting everything before my recovery. All of a sudden, I have a life that I need to live right away. After so many excuses made for why I wasn't at a meeting, I started to resent the meetings - they were getting in the way of what I needed to do with my life and it was my denial that told me, "I am practicing living the program, so I am still in recovery."

The color in the cloud started to change. It was no longer light, fluffy and pink; it was thick, heavy and gray. Being consumed with "my life" and the plans I had made to better it, I began to feel overwhelmed. I sought my refuge in my cubicle at work, or at the gym, or in the relationship. I would soon find out that none of them produced the peace and relief I sought. Why didn't I just go back to meetings? Because I had already developed a habit of not going and, one more time, depending on self. As a result of this rationalization, I isolated myself. I started to resent my job,

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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.

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Wash House Blues

I'm an addict, my name is Lester. Thanks to the Grace of a loving and caring God, the fellowship of NA and my willingness to follow some simple suggestions most of the time, I am clean today.



Well, not too long ago I went to the Laundromat to wash some clothes. I had five loads and I sorted them in front of five washing machines.

I proceeded to put in the soap and coins in the first machine to wash, when I notice a woman had gotten in front of the last machine and pushed my clothes over with her foot. She started putting her clothes in the machine.

I said "Mam, excuse me mam, I'm sure you see my clothes in front of that machine. I'm using that one." She said "You ain't put no money in it". I stood there as she proceeded to put in her clothes, soap and money. She started the machine, then walked away.

Well, apparently she failed to notice I had a gallon of Clorox Bleach in my hand. I walked over to the machine and poured the whole gallon in her wash. Later, (after a couple of minutes) I got scared and thought, "she's going to come back and whoop my ass". So, I finished putting my clothes in the rest of the machines and left. I timed my wash and came back and took my clothes -- still wet, and left again. I went to Sears that day and bought me a washer and dryer. By the way, I have never been back to that Laundromat again.

Now I felt bad after the fact, and I don't think I would ever do that again, but, the disease from which I still suffer, at that moment, told me it was ok to do what I did.

I'm telling you this so you don't have to act like I did. I've already done it for you.

Love and respect
Lester L.

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Last Night

(continued from page 1)

The coin was a seven years of sobriety marker from 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 the *heartbeat* issue Jan/Feb 2008)

Trapped

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I stopped going to the gym and I made a mess of my relationship. I was so busy pointing the finger at these things outside of me that I refused to see the three pointing right back at me.

There is a pattern that I've developed. I surrender completely and dive head first into recovery. Once I find the serenity, courage and self-esteem I'm seeking, I take it and run, thinking that I can handle life on my own. I get into the pool of life, and in the shallow end, I see that I can stand up on my own two feet, so I keep moving. As I move toward the deep end, I notice that I'm standing on the tips of my toes and I rationalize, "I'm a good swimmer," so I keep moving. Once I get to the deep end, I realize the foundation I once had to stand on is behind me where I've left it. It is at that point I find myself with my back against the wall: will I swim back to the shallow end where there's a solid foundation, or will I try and tread the waters of the deep end until I'm tired and eventually drown?

Daily surrender has to be a part of my life. No longer do I want to continue with this pattern of behavior of complacency that only weaves a very dangerous web of self-willed choices, and results in the ultimate denial of my unmanageable life. Life is too big to face on my own, and it will always be the deep end of the pool unless I first establish a solid foundation on which to stand. All thanks to God and the program of Narcotics Anonymous for being much greater than my will.

Damian C.

(Reprinted from the *heartbeat* issue Nov/Dec 2008)



We've Come A Long Way, Greater LA

The Greater Los Angeles Area of Narcotics Anonymous was formed in 1991. We were part of a massive combined area along with the San Gabriel Valley Area known as L.A./S.G.V. Members from L.A. Area got together and formed our 1st policy & guidelines committee in Sept. 1991... Members such as Dawud B., Guy W., Pat P., myself and others committed themselves to setting the ground work, even though some people from other areas believed we would never make it. They literally took us as a "joke".



Our next step was now to form an Executive Body so we held our Area Meeting held at 4920 So. Avalon Blvd. There we held the elections. At the time of our elections, we had only 35 meetings in the area (we now have over sixty) and, only 24 listed in the regional directory...Dopebusters & Uhuru were not listed in the regional directory. However...we did have G S R's representing those meetings. Area Chairperson was Guy W. Other executive committee members were elected that day, as were the sub-committee chairpersons. They were as follows-- H&I Chair: Cheryl B.. Entertainment: Dawud B.. Phonelines: Jesse J.. Public Information.: Ron S.. Literature: Bruce S., Bi-Area Newsletter: Tony Mc.

We began to organize an ad-hoc committee to host our 1st major area function held at the Holiday Inn in Downtown L.A. on So. Figueroa St. in Nov. 1991. Shorte C. and Carmelita W. were the speakers at the meeting which was followed by a dance. It was a success and the beginning of our annual anniversary celebrations. We hosted our 1st New Years Eve function the end of that same year at a hall on 59th and Broadway St. It too was a speaker meeting with a dance. It was also a success and the beginning of what has since become annual function.

Other **Firsts** followed:

- 1992: Area meeting, marathons, dances moved to MJB 11152 So. Main St. LA.
1st anniversary function held at the Mayflower Ballroom in Inglewood. Ca.
- 1993: 1st Heart 2 Heart Men's Breakfast.
1st Women in Vogue's Brunch.
- 1994: 1st Area Picnic held at the park formerly known as Centinela Park. The Picnic is now known as Summer Madness.
1st Learning Day & Talent show at Jesse Owens Park.
1st Edition of our very own newsletter "The Heartbeat" started by Tony Mc & Lester L. and other members.
- 1996: 1st Heart2Heart Men's Retreat; also a whole host of meetings and marathons were started in Downtown Skid Row.
- 1999: We got together as an area and did the unbelievable : and believe me it took a lot of "HARD" work and other areas didn't believe it was possible--- However...We the Greater Los Angeles area hosted our Area's I" Convention known as GLAACNA I "THE GIFT IS RECOVERY" at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel. Cheryl B. was our I" Convention chair; and we are currently working on GLAACNA 4 set for May 2006 (Memorial Day Weekend at the Wilshire Grand Hotel. Los Angeles Register for hotel and the convention now!!). There were a whole lot of other events that the area has hosted, there are just far too many to list in this article.

We have had scores of members from other Areas coming to our events, along with speaking for us and "WE" thank you for your invaluable support.

We also want to thank all the members from our Area that made all this possible. "OLD&NEW"... WE LOVE YOU! Members such as Bob B. who is one of the *pioneers* of our Area and NA who just recently celebrated 44 years clean in NA. Also deserving of thanks are other addicts who are no longer with us, and who did so much for the Greater Los Angeles Area...In the many and varied ways they **kept the promise of Hope and Freedom alive**: George A.. Lawrence "Beaver" A.. Roy "Shone" C., Curtis H. Donald H.. "Georgette". Brandy K.. Ike P.. Anitra R., "Stookey", Theresa W.. Nathan W.. Jabbaar W.. and "Levetra" who if you don't remember, had the illness that caused her to have both her legs removed...However... she kept coming back —clean!! If I've missed anyone here, know that they are forever in our hearts.

And must of all... we cannot forget to thank "GOD" for really blessing us as an Area of NA to help members young and old to recover and to keep coming back.

If you are new, I welcome you to this worldwide thing called NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS. Newcomers you are the life blood of our fellowship...and remember... work, school, or play--You can live the N.A. way!

Thank you, from me to you. Greater Los Angeles Area!

Bruce S.

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Across The Tracks

Back in the day before NA,
we say "viva la raza".
Across the tracks,
we say "black power".
Nevertheless, late at night addicts die.
We hear a mother cry.
Someone has just called her by phone
to let her know her addict son
will not be coming home.
A hot shot in the night
took the addict's life
while two dope dealers lay low
in some hotel kicking back.
The graveyard man digs
a six-foot hole.
The addict's mother will cry
and grow old.
Two dope dealers will soon be facing
life without parole.
Then it will be their mothers
turn to shed a tear
and grow old.
It don't matter what race you are in
our disease what goes around
comes around.
Today through NA, and a loving GOD,
addicts and their families
don't have to suffer like this anymore.
Just keep it simple.
I want to thank The Heartbeat of Nar-
cotics Anonymous for allowing me
to carry the message.
It's an honor to be of clean service.

Downtown Joe C.

(Reprinted from the heartbeat MAR/APR 2008)

Register and Pay online at our web site: www.glaana.org





HAPPY BIRTHDAY



1 YEAR
 Nick P 6/30/09
 Orlando Y 6/20/09
 Angelia H 5/18/09
 Lamont D 6/12/09
 Lisa H 6/10/09
 Gerald G 6/02/09
 Myron R 5/27/09
 James B 5/26/09
 Angelia H 5/18/09
 Da'Marion H 5/12/09
 Anita B 5/02/09
 Anna F 5/09/09

2 YEARS
 Youlonda G 6/27/08
 Stefani R 5/30/08
 Regina N 5/29/08

3 YEARS
 Jerome 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
 Orlando V 6/10/07
 Vinson T 5/28/07
 Andrea H 5/26/07
 Rian A 5/25/07
 Reggie M 5/22/07
 Kenton B 5/10/07
 Mary R 5/08/07

4 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

5 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
 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

6 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
 Sherri 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. 5/28/04
 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

7 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

8 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

9 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

10 YEARS
 Brenda JS 6/06/00
 Nathan S. 6/02/00
 Karl D. 5/27/00
 Tamika T. 5/27/00
 Tammy C. 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
 Alfreida B 5/02/00

11 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

12 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

13 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
 Russell G. 5/22/97
 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

14 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
 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

15 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

16 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

17 YEARS
 Patricia 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

18 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

19 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

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

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

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

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

25 YEARS
 Jerry H 6/20/85

26 YEARS
 Virgil M 6/04/84

27 YEARS
 Slo Ed 5/03/83

29 YEARS
 Jan W 5/07/81

34 YEARS
 Janis E. 6/29/76

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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