



SHEVANA AREA NEWS

Working Step One: Finding Relief

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Inside



Page 1: Working Step One

Page 2: The First Concept

Page 3: The Journey cont.

Uncovering a Connection with Myself

Page 4: It Crossed my Mind

Page 5: Celebrations and Acknowledgements, Subcommittees, & Special Events

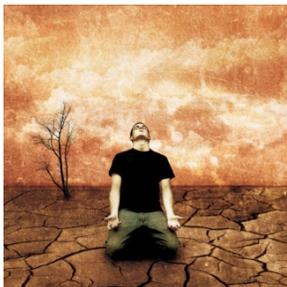
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For most of my life I have been searching for ways to be someone other than myself. From an early age I became half mad scientist, half mathematician looking for the perfect equation of chemicals and calories to make me feel in control. Despite massive efforts to transform myself and make myself feel good, I was ultimately sacrificing myself over and over. My body was a vehicle for my internal pain and I couldn't stop crashing the car no matter how much I tried to drive a straight path.

Several years ago I developed serious health issues that derailed my life in a new way. I once again dove straight into addiction to numb the devastating effects illness had on my life. Drugs brought me to new depths of despair as I tried to feel some power and control over a situation that couldn't be easily solved. Finally I had to be honest with myself and admit I was truly and utterly powerless: powerless over my addictions and powerless over my health, both bitter pills to swallow and yet so incredibly freeing.

When I began my first step I didn't know what to expect or what I would find as I answered question after question. The process was illuminating to say the very least. There on paper was the proof of the repeated ways my life had spiraled out control along with the ways I manipulated and deceived everyone around me in order to keep my addiction secret. It was like a lightbulb kept flashing on inside my head as I began to face the very real and very unavoidable facts of how destructive my beliefs and behaviors had become.

Working a step one can be painful but I also found real relief in feeling like I was seeing myself clearly for the first time. To admit powerlessness feels so huge and terrifying but beyond the fear is true freedom. I had spent years spiritually bankrupt and for the first time in my life I found could put faith in something larger than myself and truly give up the notion that I was in control. Everything in my answers pointed to the fact that I could not continue living as I had been and that in order to change, I had to surrender.



March 5th I will celebrate 365 days of continuous clean time. This past year has been a roller coaster of trials and tribulations but despite continual health challenges I strive to work a program of recovery. I write these words from my bed where I have been laying for the past two weeks dealing with a challenging flare up. The beauty is that I have a higher power now to guide me through this journey and the peace of knowing that I can admit my powerlessness and practice that powerlessness every day. Just for today I am grateful to be clean

despite the challenges I am facing.

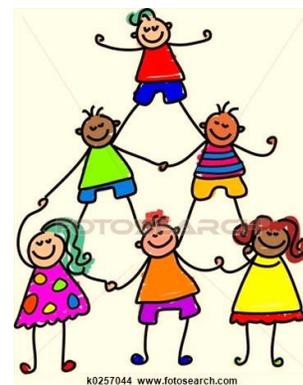
First Concept of NA- "To fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops coordinates and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole."



New things have and continue to slowly be revealed to me as I open my ears and take heed of the suggestions given, such as the tools to read, like "The Twelve Concepts of NA." I find it so amazing on how much literature and resources there are to fulfill our primary purpose, which is to carry the message of recovery to the still suffering addict. Therefore the Twelve Concepts were introduced as guiding principles of our fellowship service structure. It was originally brought to the 1982 World service Conference and after several drafts were issued, finally in 1992 a draft was adopted by more than a 2/3 margin. With that we already had our Twelve Steps that help us to grow continually in our personal recovery and then the Twelve Traditions help us maintain the unity within the groups with our fundamental decisions. The concepts give us the guidance that we need devoted to service not government.

They summarize things such as responsibility, authority, delegation, leadership, accountability, spiritual guidance etc. basically empowering the groups to create an efficient and responsive service structure to serve their common needs. The First Concept states that attending recovery meetings is the best way but not the only way that we can come together to fulfill our primary purpose. There are many ways that we reach out where we don't actually speak or touch the addict. In NA communities, groups often do basic services in addition to their services such as phone hotlines, H&I (hospitals and institutions), PI (public information), PR (public relations), outreach which typically require more people and more money than a single group can handle on its own. This is where the spiritual principle of unity is applied to by the groups joining together to develop a service structure. A structure that causes less confusion, duplication or lack of coordination by allowing them to develop, coordinate and maintain these services for the groups as a whole. Ultimately,

allowing the groups to be free to carry out their own primary responsibility. The first concept then teaches us the guiding principle of humility because the PI subcommittees exist because the groups created them, which also gives us the principle of integrity to carry out all our actions as a reflection of the groups that created us. To conclude take the time to read and understand other means such as The Twelve Concepts, on how to give it back to the still suffering addict. They guide our services and help us to ensure that the message of Narcotics Anonymous is available to all addicts who have a desire to stop using and begin practicing a new way of life, the NA way. With Loving Service, Marlene C.



Living Clean: The Journey Continues – Uncovering a Connection with Myself

By: Elizabeth N.

“It can take a long time to set us free. When we come to recovery we have been devastated in many ways. Although living clean isn’t all about crisis, it can sometimes seem that way. Our feelings are so powerful. There is so much change in our lives, and change can be messy even when it’s positive. Our Personalities and our sense of who we are were warped by our addiction, and when we get clean we are even more confused. It can be a while before we have the opportunity (or the need) to ask “Okay, who am I now? We change in recovery, but we also uncover who we were all along. We find ourselves. For many this is the restoration the second step talks about. It may even be a restoration to a state we’ve never experienced before, because we’ve never had the chance to be ourselves without pretending, without hiding, without trying to be something else.” - Connection to ourselves- P 24



NA offers one promise and one promise only, and that is freedom from active addiction. What this meant to me in the beginning is not what it means to me now. To be set free was a foreign concept, I thought it was just about putting down the drugs, loving and connecting with myself was out of the question.

I had no idea who I was when I came back to NA; I was a shell and had no clue how to go about this thing called life. I had a huge mess to clean up, and it wasn’t going to happen overnight, but change was coming, whether I agreed or not.

In the early years I was only going through the motions, the pain was very real, but I was afraid to feel. I prayed, begged and pleaded with God to restore me to something that looked like sanity, but I wanted the easy way out. My higher power knew that the only way to uncover my authentic self was to go through, not over. I was fearful of me, I had an image of who I was and in NA it was being challenged. I have learned its ok to be afraid, because courage is walking through that fear. Each time I walked through something I got a little stronger and found that hope had been transformed into faith and I could be who I was becoming. I had to be ok with me, to be ok with you. Today, I’ve learned to accept myself just as I am at any given moment. I’ve been given a gift of freedom and I don’t have to hide, pretend, nor impress anymore. The connection was there all the time; NA just helped me find it.



“It Crossed My Mind: Chasing My Recovery Like I Chased My Drugs”

By: Stephanie K.

Come around the rooms enough you will hear a lot of clichés. For me, the one that has taught me the most but has also been a hard one to keep up is “chase your recovery like you would chase your drug use”. I came into the rooms broken, swearing I would never use again. Time after time, I would get some time clean but would relapse. It's not that I wanted to hurt the people I loved, over and over again. I really meant I didn't want to use. My issue was I always found something in the program that I just didn't want to do. They told me “get a sponsor, get a network, pick up the phone, go to ALOT of meetings, even when I don't want to, do service work of some kind to stop thinking all about myself, and most importantly stop dating in early recovery.”



What I interpreted that is to: go to meetings until I found a job and meetings then become inconvenient. Service work was picking up new comers in my car to go to meetings. Get a sponsor, but only call on occasion and when I do it's for a nervous breakdown. Calling a network was people in my recovery house or if I needed a ride. As for dating in recovery? 30 days clean was a long enough time to go without getting involved with someone. I really wasn't chasing my recovery.

When I started my most recent journey in recovery I knew I needed to do something different. I committed myself to service work to keep myself out of my own mind. First was getting a home group. Then I dedicated my self to area service. When I stepped up to put the Newsletter Committee into a massive revamp I had 6 months clean. I just knew this way my way to apply everything I have learned over the last few years in the rooms. I wasn't working and I knew that being idol and just hitting meetings

weren't going to be enough. I had to really take in principals before personalities when I encountered people who opposed me chairing this committee. It gave me a drive to show people how I willing I was to do what ever it took to stick and stay. There were plenty of times I cried during and after area service because my feelings were hurt. However, I had There were plenty of times I cried during and after area service because my feelings were hurt. However, I had enough love from people in this program who supported me and loved me for where I was at. I never took vacations from my using drugs, so even when I took vacations and went to visit family in NY during Christmas I took the newsletter with me. I never quit despite how many times I wanted to. I wouldn't be where im at today without doing exactly what I did.

Now fast forward to my current recovery. Ive been given all these gifts that have come back to me. A full time job, a new car, paid off a lot of my past wreckage. Its easy for me to forget my past so everyday I make a conscience decision to go all out on my recovery. When things are going good in my life, I choose to go after my recovery 2000% as if everything is going wrong. I want to be prepared for when life shows up, as it always does. I realize now my recovery is only as strong as how much work I put into it. I cannot sit on the side lines and expect recovery to come to me. I'm not always good at chasing my recovery but I know that as long as I don't pick up I can try again tomorrow. I don't have to try to be perfect today, for right now I'm right where I am supposed to be.

Celebration Acknowledgments, Subcommittees and Special Events

Date	Celebration	Home Group	Location
Tues. Feb 17	Vickie D.-5 yrs	Welcome Home in Recovery	Stephens City
Thurs. Feb.26	Linda A.-23 yrs	War is Over	Berryville
Sat., Feb. 28	Ashley S.-2 yrs	Fire, Faith & Fellowship	Rivendell
Sat., Mar. 7th	Stephen P.-3 yrs	Midday NA	Edgehill Center
Sat., Mar. 7th	Meredith G.-2 yrs	Fire, Faith & Fellowship	Rivendell
Mon., Mar. 9th	Genevieve H.- 1yr.	Sisters in Spirit	Edgehill Center
Tues.,Mar. 10th	John P.-4 yrs	Eyes to the Sky	John Mann Church
Sat., Mar. 14	Michelle H.-2yrs.	Midday	Edgehill Center
Tues.,Mar. 24th	John A.-16 yrs	Eyes to the Sky	John Mann Church

***Some celebrations may have already passed, but we still want to acknowledge the celebrant!!

Date/Time	Event/Activity	Host	Location
1st Sun/Mo - 10:30 am	Subcommittee Meeting	Special Events	Edgehill - Mtg Rm
1st Mon/Mo - 7:00 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Hosp. & Inst.	303 S. Loudon, Winchester
1st Tues/Mo - 7:15 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Outreach	Edgehill - Marilyn Rm
1st Wed /Mo - 6:15 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Policy	Edgehill - Marilyn Rm
1st Sat/Mo - 6:00 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Newsletter	WMC Cafeteria
3rd Tues/Mo - 8:15 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Literature	Throx Market, Winchester
4th Sun/Mo - 3:00 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Pub.Relations	Throx Market, Winchester

Flyers for events can be found at meetings or visit shevana.org

Sun., Feb. 22nd, 11a-3p SheVANA Bowling Day SheVANA Special Events Northside Lanes, Winchester

Sat., April 11th - Time TBD Tradition Working Guide Workshop, Trads 2-7 Central Atlantic Region Edgehill Recovery

****Solution Seekers which usually meets at 6PM on Tuesdays at the old hospital in downtown Winchester has a new meeting space as of March 3, 2015. Solution Seekers will now be held at Winchester Medical Tuesdays at 6PM 1840 Amherst Street, in the conference room in the back of the cafeteria (Same place where Experience, Strength and Hope meets on Saturday nights)***

NOTE For All Submissions:

By submitting article(s), poem(s), and/or other written material pertaining to my personal experiences with or options about the NA fellowship or program, I understand that my material may be edited. I also give the Shevana Area Newsletter, Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship, their successors, assigns and those acting on their authority permission to publish anything submitted. I further understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity, unless authorized. I possess full legal capacity to exercise the authorization and hereby release Shevana Area Newsletter, the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship, its service boards and committees, from any claim by myself, my successors and or my assigns.

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