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Please submit art work and ideas to:
 Shenandoah Valley of NA
 PO Box 2436
 Winchester, VA 22604

Or online through
shevana.org

Living Clean, Chap. 7, Page 239 Keeping it Real

"When the message we carry is an honest reflection of our experience rather than what we imagine other people want to hear, the truth can set all of us free."

By: An Addict

Twenty years ago (1995) a friend of mine, who had 23 years clean at the time in NYC, told me that I had to get honest with myself and to always keep it real with others. He said, "Marlene it takes a daily commitment to self-discipline yourself to be honest but you must be aware that your worst enemy is the one lurking in your head. You have to perceive life as it is and accept it when you can change it and when you cannot, you can get this for free by coming to NA." Of course my response was, "I am not like the

drug addict on the streets." I had viewed an addict to be the homeless



guy on the corner who chose to shoot a needle and nod than eat or have a place to live. I always thought I was different or better than, a big EGO for sure. When I finally accepted the invite to attend

a meeting, I just would find myself still comparing and judging others as not being like me. Attending the meetings after a while would get boring which then would lead to the thought that I was cured and honestly believed that one hit or drink would never lead me to a thousand being too many. Wow, how long did I believe that truth...LIE!!!

After my seventh relapse, another friend of mine in VA, (yep, I tried the geographic idea) asked me, "are you tired yet of riding that spiral rollercoaster with no end to the insanity?"

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Step Nine

We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

STEP NINE: *Moving Forward through our Fear*

By: An Addict



For me, step 9 was the step that I feared the most.

Working up to this step, it was all about me and how I could change my life with the help of my higher power. Now, I really need to put the trust I had gained into action. My belief that my higher power would carry me through was par-

amount, I needed to have a foundation before I could ever work this step. I needed honesty, open mindedness, and willingness to face the people I had hurt, and courage to speak my truth about the wrongs I had done.

Through working the 8th step, I made a list of all those I had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. That part was not hard, because I really didn't have to face anyone yet. My sponsor helped me go through the list to decipher who I had really harmed, and who I

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Living Clean

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That is right, 20 years later, I realized that all along I was totally the problem. I was worried about what people thought of me. I still wanted to be approved by others or to fit in. I found myself acting like others, just to appear like I had it together, yet I was never truly happy heck I couldn't accept myself for who I was. Or complacency would set in after a couple of 24 hours under my belt and I would stop sharing because I had high expectations of myself of where I should have been in my journey.

Or I would compare myself to elders by putting them on a pedestal and thinking less of myself. All excuses for me to stay in the feelings of disillusion and discouragement which would ultimately put me in isolation. I looked at clean time and the past but would always find a reason to stay in the negative. I would let my present problems to swallow me in fear to the point that I would just give up and pick up my drug of choice.



I am grateful that my HP allowed me to reach a bottom when I almost got deported because of my choice to use and run

from my problems. In my 15 months of detention, I realized that my family meant the world to me and that I was going to die if I did not change for the better. I did not know then, if that day I would be in the USA or if I was going back to El Salvador. It was during that time that I finally understood what it meant to trust the process. A past sponsor had told me to practice to K.I.S.S. myself and that things would get better. Yeah, she meant to Keep It Simple Stupid and to practice the principles in all my life decisions. So in that detention, I met true isolation, not what I had imagined as isolation to be when I was free supposedly in my active addiction. I realized then and today that I have a choice for all the

things I do or say. And that NA is different at the different stages of my growth and that all I need to do is to stay in the today. I understood then and now that it is a commitment for me to choose to remain clean one day at a time. It was and is the action to open the literature, read it and write it to live it. It was clear that without these actions including my attendance of meetings regularly, calling sponsor and/or network that I would be dead today from this disease. I had to be and am completely honest with my heart on my sleeve when I attend meetings, I share my sorrows and joys which I call growth pains. When I do, I feel 100% better because others can ID with my feelings. They then share the message of hope through their experience and strength which gives me the courage to continue this journey of recovery one day at a time. By keeping it real as a recovering addict to live in honesty, openmindedness and willingness just for today I am set free.



Concept 9 - Considering all Views

It's easy to discuss things with those who agree with us. But in recovery we've learned that our own best thinking may not necessarily offer us the best possible guidance. Our experience has shown us that the ideas of those who disagree with us are often the ones we need most to hear.

The Ninth Concept is one tool we use to help ensure that our group conscience is as well-informed as it can possibly be. In any discussion, it is tempting to ignore dissenting members, especially if the vast majority of members think alike.

The Ninth Concept puts this to work in the service environment. When making a decision, our groups, service boards, and committees should actively seek out all available viewpoints.

Yet it is often the lone voice, offering new information or a unique perspective on things that saves us from hasty or misinformed decisions.

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SHEVANA Special Events Subcommittee invites you to a...

SPONSOR-SPONSEE

BREAKFAST

And Speaker Meeting

Saturday, September 12, 2015
 Market Street United Methodist Church
 131 South Cameron Street - Winchester VA
 (enter on Cork Street - double white doors)

Breakfast at 10:30 Am
 meeting at 11:00 Am

**SUGGESTED DONATION - \$8.00
 OR 2 FOR \$15.00**

If you don't have a sponsor... this is a great opportunity to meet a potential one!

From Northern VA & DC: Follow Route 7 West into Winchester (Route 7 turns into Berryville Avenue. Turn left onto Pleasant Valley Road. (Left lane has to turn left.) Turn right at the second light onto Cork Street. Go thru 2 stoplights - the church is on the right, on the corner of Cork and Cameron streets.
 Or
 Follow 86W to 81N. Take exit 315 (Rt. 7). Turn right off the exit ramp onto Berryville Ave (Route 7). Turn left onto Pleasant Valley Road. (Left lane has to turn left.) Turn right at the second light onto Cork St. Go thru 2 stoplights - the church is on the right, on the corner of Cork and Cameron streets.

From Martinsburg, Pointa Park: Follow 81S to exit 315 (Rt. 7). Turn right off the exit ramp onto Berryville Ave (Route 7). Turn left onto Pleasant Valley Rd. (Left lane has to turn left.) Turn right at the second light onto Cork St. Go thru 2 stoplights - the church is on the right, on the corner of Cork and Cameron streets.

From Philadelphia: Follow 86W to exit 315 (Rt. 7). Turn right off the exit ramp onto Berryville Ave (Route 7). Turn left onto Pleasant Valley Rd. (Left lane has to turn left.) Turn right at the second light onto Cork St. Go thru 2 stoplights - the church is on the right, on the corner of Cork and Cameron streets.

**Meet your sponsor or Treat your sponsor
 COME OUT AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!**

Contacts: Page C: 540-542-9777 Eliza D: 540-640-5892 Kenny D: 540-337-3160

War is Over has moved
 St. Mary's Parish 15 Barnett St. Berryville,
 Thursdays, 7:00pm

Sept. 8 **Solution Seekers** is moving
 St. Paul's on the Hill 1527 Senseny Rd.
 Tuesdays, 6pm

Ninth Concept

"All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes."

Never Forget

by Sahir C.

John was a good man, an intelligent individual with the talent to do anything he put his mind to. In fact his soul endeavors were spent giving back to others. You can say he would literally give the shirt off his own back to whomever was in need. But despite the solidarity and happiness he brought to others, he always found himself crawling back to the bottle.

By day he worked for a foundation that helped people in recovery from addiction in their journey to become productive members of society; but by night John spent his time sitting alone in his own active addiction. Because he was known within the recovery community he would travel 30 minutes one way to the next town over to use. It was his daily routine to end the day in oblivion.

Within two years of this same daily cycle he could feel his health deteriorate, but everyone around him never saw his true problem surface. In his mind he felt in control. He told himself that he was invincible, but deep down he dreaded the increasing pain he kept hidden. By this time he started to become apprehensive with his job and apathetic with helping others. The desire and passion to grow turned into an impatient need to use.

One day the local police escorted a guy named Seth to John's office. When John looked up at Seth he was speechless to see his old college acquaintance standing before him. This was a person who was at the top of his graduating class with countless dis-

tinctions and offers to any graduate program in the country. John never thought in a million years he would see someone with such a distinguished background and promising future be escorted into his office in handcuffs, in need of help.

John kept it professional with his usual greetings, "hello, and what brings you in today?" Seth looked up without a sec-



ond glance of recognizing John and said, "I'm an addict and I want to die." John was in awe. In fact he pitied Seth without acknowledging his own addiction.

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Concept Nine, Continued from Page 2

In Narcotics Anonymous, we are encouraged to respect that lone voice, to protect it, even seek it out. Without it our service decisions would undoubtedly suffer.

Concept Nine is not telling us to become perpetual nay-sayers, objecting to anything agreed to by the majority. It does say, however, that we are responsible to share our thoughts and conscience with our fellow members, carefully explaining our position and listening with equal care to the positions of others. By insisting on thorough discussion of important issues, the worst we can do is take a little of each other's time; at best, we protect the fellowship from the consequences of a hasty or misinformed decision.

When a service body is making a decision, the Ninth Concept can be exercised in a variety of ways. As an NA member, you *always have a voice* on any service matter. There are a variety of avenues you can take to express your position. By

sharing your views at your group's business meeting, you ensure that your ideas will be included in the mix of group conscience that guides your GSR when she or he participates in service discussions. Many service boards or committees such as SheVANA set aside a portion of their agenda for open forums, when you can speak your own mind on issues before the body. Fellowship newsletters and journals, from the local to the world level, often offer space where NA members can share their viewpoints on service matters at hand. Whether or not you are a member of a service body, there are a variety of ways in which you can personally exercise the Ninth Concept.

Concept Nine encourages us to continue to consult group conscience, even after a decision has been made. If discussions are raised about a question already decided, the body is bound to hear them. Half-hearted support of, or outright resistance to, any decision runs contrary

to our principles of surrender and acceptance. Once a decision has been made, reconsidered, and confirmed, we need to respect it, and go on about the business of serving our fellowship.

Without the expression of individual conscience to the group, we block the guidance of a loving God, our ultimate authority. When a position supported by many is challenged by a few, our service boards and committees should treat such input with respect and careful consideration. The information and insights offered by the few may save us from dangerous mistakes; they may even lead us to previously undreamt-of horizons where we might fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose more effectively. For the sake of our fellowship; members yet to come; service boards and committees must always carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.

STEP 9 - Continued from Page 1

had not. It seemed to me that I needed to be sorry to everyone, but that is not what the 9th step is about.

I had done obvious harm in my family, especially my children. I did not make amends right away. Nobody wanted to hear my excuses, they wanted to see

my actions, was I really sorry about the harm I had done? or did I just want to ease my guilt. Making amends too early may actually cause more harm. I had to understand this before I could do a thorough 9th step.

My first formal amends were to my children. I was able to be alone with each of them and talk about what I had done, how sorry I was for the pain I caused, and what I was doing now. The beauty was that they could see what I was doing, and how it affected everyone's life. It took a long time to gain their trust, but today I have an amazing relationship with these young adults.

Not all of my amends were formal, I've had plenty of opportunities that came up without me looking for them. There is nothing more cleansing than looking someone in the eye and making amends. There is feeling in my spoken and living amends. I've had the opportunity to clean up a lot of messes, but have found this is an ongoing process.

I am grateful I don't have to hide any more; I am grateful there is healing.

Step 9 is the last of the clean-up steps where I get to put into practice what I have been so freely given.

Never Forget

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Seth made it clear that he didn't want help, he just wanted to live out the rest of his life alone. John asked, "What happened?" He could see the emotions well up in Seth's face as he responded by saying, "I'm an addict ... and by God, it will be the end of me." John shook his head, it seemed hopeless. "Seth, if you don't want any help then there's nothing I can do for you." Seth then stood up and impatiently left the office.

Three years past. John is now a sponsor sitting in a coffee shop telling this very same story to hisponsee, Eric.

At the end of the story Eric asked, "What happened to Seth? Did you ever see him again?" John reluctantly looked at Eric and said, "No. That was the last time I ever saw him. A week after our visit I found out that Seth took his last breath and was found on a park bench right down the street from my office."

Eric, I want you to know that I had to find my rock bottom, just as you found yours. The reason why I am telling you this story is because even though I may have some time clean time and life is beautiful today, this memory alone keeps me from never

forgetting how bad this disease can become. I know what you are going through. All I have to say is that I remember a time when I was always afraid of how bad things would have to get, but today, being clean all I have to look forward to is how great life can be.

**2015 Membership Survey**

Every two years we attempt to gather information about our members, and the time to gather that information is now! Some may wonder why we want this information and how we use it. One of the aims of "A Vision for NA Service" is that NA is viewed as a "viable program of recovery." With members from several countries attending the world convention in Rio de Janeiro, and members around the world participating from their homes, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that we are, indeed, a viable and respected recovery community resource. Presenting ourselves in this way helps us offer hope to others that they, too, can recover. We encourage each member to spread the word of the Membership Survey to their friends. We would like as many members throughout NA worldwide to participate.

To complete the survey online
by 4 October 2015, go to
www.na.org/survey

Greetings from NA World Services,

We are excited to present you with the final batch of review material for the Traditions Project. All current review materials are online at: www.na.org/traditions

**Deadline for input on Traditions 11, 12, & Conclusion is Sept. 30!**

We hope you will send input —there's no need to hold your input until you've read the entire batch; a chapter or a section at a time is actually preferable. The sooner we receive your input, the more time we have to incorporate your ideas into the revisions. An approval form will be published in November 2015 as an addendum to the Conference Agenda Report (CAR). *Thank you, once again, for your participation. - NA World Services*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS AND EVENT NOTICES

Date/Time	Event/Activity	Host	Location
1st Sun/Mo - 10:30 am	Subcommittee Meeting	Special Events	Edgehill - Meeting 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, Winchester
3rd Tues/Mo - 8:15 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Literature	Throx Market, Winchester
4th Sun/Mo - 3:00 pm	Subcommittee Meeting	Public Relations	Throx Market, Winchester

*** Celebration information can be found in the SheVANA Calendar at shevana.org

For All Submissions:

By submitting articles, poems, and/or other written material pertaining to my personal experiences with or opinions about the NA, 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 understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity, but this cannot be 100% guaranteed. I possess full legal capacity to exercise authorization and hereby release Shevana Newsletter, the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship, its service boards and committees, from any claim by myself, my successors and or my assigns.

We're on the web!
Shevana.org

Regional Phone Line 800 777 1515
Email: Newsletter@shevana.org
Web: <http://www.shevana.org/>

*More will be revealed...
...upcoming SheVANA events*

Homegroup Chili Cookoff

November 22nd
Market Street UMC

Holiday Dinner

December 12th
Market Street UMC

Day Trip to New York City

December 5th.