



NARCOTICS
ANONYMOUS
PRODUCTIONS

NA TODAY

free publication of the Australian region

March 2011



*To the
meeting!*



The NA Today Magazine belongs to all members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission is to provide recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment.

In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff are dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around Australia, as well as current service and convention information.

Foremost, we're dedicated to the celebration of our message "that a addict can stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."

The NA Today Magazine welcomes articles from all readers. Articles can be your own story, experience, strength and hope, a response to any article that has appeared in the NA Today, or simply a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship.

Articles should be no more than 800 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All articles must include a name, address, and phone number. First names and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.

Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, cartoons, ideas etc to:

natoday@na.org.au

or to the

NA Today
c/- Fellowship Service Office
1st Floor, 204 King St
Newtown NSW 2042

The NA Today presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. Opinions expressed are not to be attributed to NA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous, The NA Today, or the Narcotics Anonymous Regional Service Committee.

Editor: Caroline M Vectors: Tim B & Kitty I

Monkey see, Monkey do

For years I'd wake up in the morning, have a bong, and hate the universe for keeping me alive for another day. I felt so alone, and the inside of my head was a dark place from which there was no escape. I grew up in an alcoholic family and, even though I swore I'd never turn out like my parents, it was a case of monkey see monkey do. I grew up and took on my parents' emotional retardation and dysfunctional coping mechanisms. Feel bad? Have a drink or a drug, you'll feel better. Yeah well, that only worked for a while.

I suffered through a range of traumatic things during my upbringing, and as a result of being victimised, I became a professional victim. I blamed all the people, all the places and all the things in the world for how I'd turned out. I was so full of misdirected rage and hurt that I never bothered to look at myself. I was always too busy pointing the finger at others that I couldn't see that I'd perpetuated my own crappy state of mind. I'd had poor role models but I couldn't blame them forever.

I first tried getting clean in 2006. I went to a detox then to two rehabs back to back. While I was waiting to get into the first rehab I started going to NA meetings. I floated around the rooms in a bit of a daze not really knowing what NA was all about, wanting to fit in but feeling like an imposter. A few people talked to me, and I tried to listen, but I was too busy noticing the differences and not the similarities.

The rehabs I went to were like chalk and cheese. The first place was cottonwool-wrapped harm minimisation and the second place was 12 step based deconstruct you until you scream type stuff. Needless to say I freaked out and ran (well flew actually) back to my dysfunctional family. Within two hours of being back in Melbourne I had a line of speed up my nose and I was off again. I did learn a lot in both those rehabs, but I soon tried my best to forget. Denial is a power-

ful thing.

That relapse lasted three years. For about two of those years my denial was working quite well, but then things started going bad. My social using turned into using in isolation and I couldn't keep deluding myself that things were okay. So in December 2009 I booked myself into detox again. I had no intention of coming back to the rooms: I just knew I had to stop using drugs.

While I was in the detox a couple of NA members came and did a Hospitals & Institutions presentation. I recognised one of them from when I hung around the rooms four years ago. He recognised me too. He was one year clean when I met him in 2006 and now he's five years clean. He seemed genuinely happy and spoke very highly of NA. I don't think I could have found a better example of a recovering addict if I tried. He talked about keeping it simple and not using one day at a time.

I left detox later that week and sought out an NA meeting. I was anxious about going back after such a long time, but I knew that if I wanted to stay clean I had to get back to NA and start listening. I had to take the cottonwool out of my ears and stick it in my mouth, as the older, cleaner, members say. Needless to say I was welcomed back into the fold.

Within my first 30 days I'd gotten a sponsor and bought a copy of the Step Working Guide. And so began my journey into recovery. Through fits and starts, procrastination and progress, I worked the program to the best of my ability. My sponsor has helped me immensely, I've shared my Step work with him even though my trust issues are still there, and he hasn't judged me, rejected me, or humiliated me. He's had faith in me when I had none, he's told me I'm worth it when I didn't think I was, he's been patient when I wanted to be cured already. He showed me love even though I didn't know how to receive it. Get yourself a sponsor!!

I went to small meetings and big meetings, healthy meetings and sick meetings, meetings, meetings, meetings, and I shared when I was asked to share. An older, cleaner, member asked if I'd ever knocked back a drug, when I said no, he said I should have that same attitude toward sharing. I agreed with him, because I realised that if I put half the effort I put into scoring into recovery, I'd turn out ok.

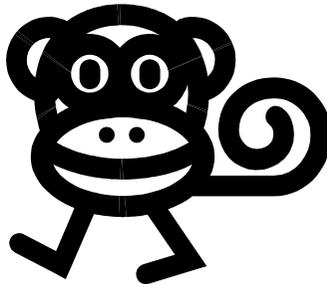
One of the major hurdles I encountered in my recovery was a belief in a Higher Power. I'm a staunch Atheist and hold massive resentments toward religion and its Gods. The word God still gives me the creeps. So, in order to get my head out of the way, I chose to hand my will over to the program. I did the suggested things (step work, service, sharing). Faith was a foreign concept to me, but I have learned that the program works if you work it, and it doesn't if you don't, so I chose to put my faith into the program and work it to the best of my ability. I'm grateful that each member has the right to develop their own concept of a Higher Power.

I was told that service keeps you clean, and after about four months of washing dishes at various meetings, I took on a service position. I became a Group Service Representative and a Treasurer. It was a bit daunting at first, but I soon realised that my service positions were doing me good: they got me out of my self-obsessed headspace and forced me to think of others. And the Area Service Committee is an experience all its own! It was good to see NA unity and passionate debate about issues affecting the fellowship of NA. It showed me that NA is bigger than the individual meetings I attend. It showed me that we are a state-wide, nationwide and worldwide fellowship. It helped me feel less alone.

So I've held on to my service positions, continued my Step work, reached out to other members when I needed support and supported others when they needed it. Today I'm one year clean, today I have awareness around some of my character defects, today I feel like I'm a part of Narcotics

Anonymous, today I have compassion for the still suffering addict, today I like myself and today my future looks brighter than it ever has before.

Anonymous



NA Men's Retreat @ Evan's Head

1, 2 & 3 April 2011

Evans Head-1hr from Byron Bay

This NA Men's Retreat is being held to create a weekend of fellowship, unity and meetings for men in recovery from addiction

Contact Joe 0407065849 or James 0411 292833 as pre-paid registration is required.

More information available on the NA website @ www.na.org.au

The Top Ten...

...reasons to stay away from that attractive newcomer standing over there.

1. Don't be a sleazebag
2. Don't be a sleazebag
3. Don't be a sleazebag
4. Don't be a sleazebag
5. Don't be a sleazebag
6. Don't be a sleazebag
7. Don't be a sleazebag
8. Don't be a sleazebag
9. Don't be a sleazebag
10. It is hard to get clean. God knows we all know it. If you act on your impulses you may be putting someone else's at recovery on the line. And if they look like they need help - do an esteemable thing and ask someone who doesn't want to sleep with them to go talk to them.

How's the Serenity?

I had this beautiful, peaceful and serene place; a fortress of solitude with a rock solid foundation; a true castle in every sense. I am speaking metaphorically of course, however just like the film I am using as reference, I am now involved in a bitter battle to keep my clean, serene place. I am not fighting outside influences like the Government and airport authorities, but my castle is in the way of a proposed flight path. A path that if taken will lead me out the door and back to using. I feel it. I do regular meetings, I pray, I ask for help, I share when asked, I talk to my sponsor, I work the steps, I have a service position and still I feel it.

I am having trouble writing this.... I am not at all happy with what's come out. Reading back that first paragraph I feel so stupid, it sounds utterly ridiculous. I tell myself I am a complete dickhead, writing like I have some idiotic opinion column in the newspaper that no one reads. I am not going to change it, better to name it and move on. So this is where I am today. At least I feel honest and real. I find solace in that.

I am completely stuck on my step four and I am sure that a lot of my feelings can be attributed to having not done it but it doesn't make it any easier. I seem to have these moments of intense happiness that last and last but eventually are followed by these horrible, angry lows. I remember someone saying once, "Sometimes you are flush and sometimes you're bust and when you're up it's never as good as it seems and when you're down you just want to be up". I just want to be up. In this place I really need to watch my behaviour, I act out in many different ways. I can be so rude, cutting and scathing; really running people down. I hate this, I don't want to be that person in the most sincere and heartfelt way. I don't want to use. I have a friend in jail with a broken jaw, one in the hospital, and another's using. I don't want any of that again.

This head space is reminiscent of my really early recovery and the time I spent in rehab, where for the most part I was not accountable for my actions. The difference now is that I make amends where possible and actually feel bad if my comments or actions impact negatively on others. When others affect me, I just try to put principles before personalities and accept the things I cannot change. I remind myself that we are all just trying to do the best we can on any given day. I have a really hard time at the moment living what seems to be a double life - one in recovery and another with "normal" people (note the inverted commas.)

I try to give back; a lot has been given to me by some very special people. I found a message in a fortune cookie the other day that read "If you always give you will always have." I kept it and gave it to my sponsor. I could tell it meant a lot to him. These are the moments I cherish and when I remind myself of these simple little things that bring myself and those I love happiness, I feel uplifted and am grateful for every little moment clean whether I am up or down.

I feel a lot better now, I guess in writing this is I have began to take a moral inventory, maybe more of a quick stock take than a thorough inventory, but none the less it's a start. So how do I end this positively? I guess you have to do whatever it takes to protect your serenity from the unwanted advances of addiction; my freedom is a coveted prize worthy of any pool room.

The next time I feel like my serenity is in jeopardy I am going to say "Bad luck ya dickhead" and tell him he's dreaming!

Chris M
Byron Bay.

Facebook, the Traditions, and Anonymity

“Mr. X”, asked the reporter, “how are you going with not drinking?”

“Fine,” said Mr. X, one of the most famous TV and movie stars in the world, “I’m in AA now. It’s great; all my friends are in AA too.” When that happened, back when TV was black and white, all Mr. X’s high profile Hollywood friends suddenly had unwanted issues to deal with, and Mr. X drank again.

The Facebook story next is very similar, thankfully without the relapse. One of your two generous writers - the Tolerant One - after an NA Unity Day dance had a childhood friend make contact on Facebook asking if she were in NA. It turned out that photographs of people at the dance, along with NA identifiers, were up on somebody’s Facebook page. ‘All these friends are in NA’!

Thankfully, it was a *real* friend that made contact, and there was no great harm done. However, being first time and new in recovery, it was certainly cause for discomfort and a feeling of being violated. The display was unintentional and was removed from public access – but if you have such pics up on a public page don’t panic, simply consider taking them down.

This was disturbing for your Gentle Writer, and if it had happened to the Cantankerous One, he might be Very Cross. In the big picture, of course, this is a small thing; but it does raise some important issues. The lifeblood of NA is new members, and obviously not all of us are experienced with the Traditions. So a bit of a look at them, and especially anonymity, is always useful.

What are the Traditions anyway? For those that don't yet know, NA has gratefully adapted them from AA, where they are simply introduced with "Our experience has taught us that..." Go read them yourself in NAs *It Works How and Why* or the *Basic Text*, but for now here's the idea: Tradition 1, unity, is the foundation and nothing else works without it. Tradition 2 means I don't tell you what to do, Tradition 3 means a Group can't tell me what to do, and Tradition 4 means that the Area can't tell the Groups what to do; with some caveats, of course. The other Traditions are all for one-off special purposes; such as employing people, declining outside funding, and so on.

And there is Tradition 11 – 'Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press radio and films' - *and all other media*. Here, we're interested in the second part this Tradition; the personal anonymity of ourselves and others.

The first thing we notice about NA and Facebook is that we know everyone's second names; and that's fine. We often think – wrongly – that anonymity means keeping our surnames secret. Nothing so shallow! NA as a whole doesn't give a damn *who* we are; if we're famous, homeless, rich, broke, in jail doing a life sentence, what profession, religion, using or not using – nothing.

Anonymity means bearing no name at all, which suites your Old and Forgetful co-writer just fine. Or, from *It Works How and Why* p209, it means that we want collective guidance from spiritual principals for our fellowship, rather than from individual personalities. In other words, more Higher Power, less self.

All NA is interested in is if an addict wants to get clean, or wants to stay that way, and how we can help. So on a personal level, NA doesn't care about names; which is not to

say that you or we don't. The point is that it's our own decision, and one that must not be made by anyone else. Outside of the media, we can tell who we want. In fact, we can't work much of a 12th step without telling at least some people who we really are.

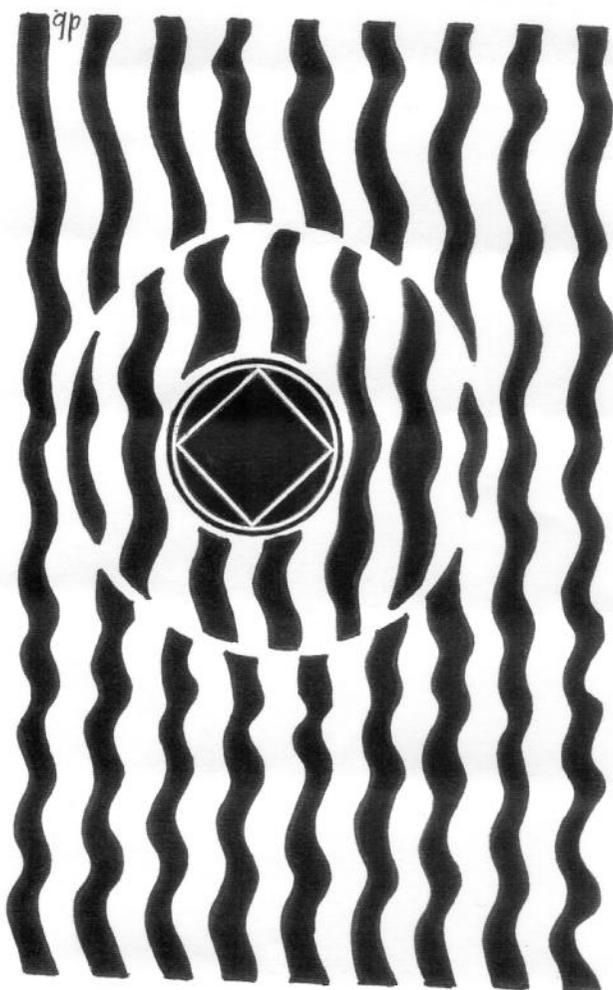
In the media, it's different; Tradition 11 says that NA *does* care about personal anonymity. Here's why; the Grey Haired one of us saw the famous Mr. 'C' on TV saying how he was so grateful to have beaten addiction by coming to our meetings, and months later he was again in the news facing serious guns and drugs possession charges. An individual can make us look ineffective, or even bring NA into disrepute.

NA both needs and has a public profile, but it is best handled at an Area Service level in a spirit of anonymity, not by unguided individuals.

There are many examples of famous people writing books and giving TV interviews explicitly describing their addiction and subsequent recovery in NA (or AA), who have been clean for decades. In fact, one of those TV interviews helped the Spiritually Generous one of our team into recovery. And we know of others in meetings with similar experiences, so it's not all bad. And as far as we can see (with a Google search!) both Mr. X and Mr. C are clean today. But we could have given several other examples of people waving an NA flag while coming publicly un-stuck too.

We need to try to be a little bit humble, and simply be considerate of other people and Narcotics Anonymous as whole. Gee, that sounds a bit like selflessness...

Louise W, and Alan P.
(We're not *that* anonymous)



The title comes later...

I was at a meeting last night where a member who was 2 and a half years clean had just come back from a relapse. When he shared, he spoke about how at a previous meeting that day he was asked by a member and I quote...

“What are you going to do differently this time?”

He was a little dismayed, as he did not know how to really take this question, so I thought I would write a short memoir of my experience of the questions that I have been asked over the years. I title the piece:

WHEN SOMEONE COMES BACK TO MEETINGS AFTER A RELAPSE MAYBE JUST MAYBE YOU MIGHT NOT ASK

1. Why did you do it? (Ahhh I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you)
2. Have you had enough? (I hope so, oh sorry, yes, yes, I have had enough, that's what you want to hear right?)
3. What happened to step 1? (I don't know. It did not work, no I mean I did not work it - oh shit I'm confused)
4. What are you going to do different this time? (Ahhh I don't know! No sorry I do know - everything. I will do everything differently this time. That's the right answer right?)
5. Have you surrendered this time?
6. How many meetings were you doing?
7. Why didn't you call before you picked up?
8. What were you doing wrong?
9. Do you have a sponsor?
10. What is wrong with you? Your program?

Etc, etc ad infinitum!

These questions don't really help. How about you take a

deep breath, and take a micro-second break between your thoughts and engaging your mouth. You know your intentions are good, you mean well. You really want to see them get it; you would love to see them recover. You really want to carry the message right!

Are you frustrated with the person or actually with the disease? It is a killer is it not? How many of your original peers are around now? How many faces have you seen come and go? How many of your friends, your peers that you shared with, went to meetings with, friends that you loved have died?

Wouldn't you like your words to match your intentions? Ask yourself, "What words can I say to encourage and maybe help this person to come to another meeting tomorrow".

I remember one night I was 26 days clean. My wife lay asleep in bed beside me. My beautiful 2 year old son was asleep in the bedroom next to ours. I got out of bed quietly and went to the Cross to score coke. Instant psychosis was what happened. It always happened now. I came home, crept into the spare bedroom crying out to God in despair and hopelessness. "This must stop God! I am killing those I love. I can't go on, please, please help me", only to repeat the cycle a week later.

When asked why I did what I did, I really had no plausible answer. Quote: "and the truth, strange to say, is usually that he has no more idea why he took that first drug than you have". Some of us have excuses with which we are satisfied with part of the time. But in our hearts we do not know why we do it. Relapse unfortunately is part of our fellowship. May each of us be willing to choose our words carefully and lovingly to the person who comes back to our meetings.

Thanks
Steve H



The 90 Day Checklist

1. Haven't picked up drugs
 2. Doing at least a meeting everyday
 3. Got a sponsor
 4. Haven't picked up drugs
 5. Talking to sponsor regularly
 6. Purchased basic text and begun reading it
 7. Purchased steps working guide
 8. Haven't picked up drugs
 9. Attending second half of the meetings/coffee shops etc.
 10. Collected phone numbers
 11. Staying away from old playgrounds and old play-mates
 12. Avoiding isolation
- And finally...
13. Haven't picked up drugs



Hi, I'm Michael and I'm an addict

My clean date is May 20 1984. I was a garden variety addict in the western suburbs of Sydney. My disease has been evident to me since the age of 5 when, on my very first day at school, I felt different and less than the other kids and from that I projected that my family, as a whole, fell short as well. Unless I had a drug in my system or was in some other form of addiction, I felt this way until after arriving in Narcotics Anonymous.

I used a variety of drugs until finding heroin, which became my drug of choice. I won't share a blow by blow account of my using history except to say that I started off feeling that I had found what had been missing in my life for so long but slowly and surely the ugly side of addiction began to reveal itself – detoxes, psychiatric centres, overdoses, and alienation. It seemed as though the drugs were letting me down and no longer removing the discomfort of my disease. In the last 12 months of my using I landed at my mother's house, which had to be a nightmare for her.

My family came around one day to do an intervention. I showed no sign of willingness and several weeks later they came around again and threw me out of the house, told me never to come back and changed the locks to the place. I cursed them for that at the time but I have to say now it was a defining moment in me finding recovery – it saved my life. I went and used then went to a detox in my area which would only put me up for one night. The next day, as I was leaving, they gave me the addresses of two rehabs.

I went to Centrelink that morning trying to get a cheque off them, telling them I had nowhere to go and then I found myself pulling out the addresses that were given to me at the detox that morning and I said "I have somewhere to go, all I need is the train fare to get there." I shocked myself by my actions.

The rehab sent us to NA meetings and it was at Glebe on a Friday night that I heard my story being told. On the way home on the bus I noticed that I felt a lot better than I had for years. I got on my knees that night and when I awoke in the morning I felt an intense feeling of euphoria. I was later to learn that I had had a spiritual awakening.

I still had to learn that I couldn't do it my way and spent a year in and out of the doors of NA. Then one day I was walking along Williams Street with the money in my pocket to get on, when I became aware of a voice in my head yelling out "I don't want to do this anymore and the only reason I'm not staying clean is that I'm not doing the suggested things that other people in NA are doing." Instead of getting on, I walked to a rehab – a Thursday lunchtime meeting had just started there. I spoke to people after the meeting. I joined the Tuesday night meeting there and was almost immediately voted in as Secretary of that group. I got a sponsor and went to meetings every day – sometimes twice a day. I've been clean ever since.

Circumstances dictated that I had to move back to the western suburbs to take custody of my son. I became friends with Wayne C. We saw a need for more meetings to be opened in the West. At that time there were only 3 meetings; Westmead, Riverstone and Sunday mornings at Burwood where members played a very competitive form of touch footie after the meeting. There were also 2 meetings at Blacktown Hospital that weren't NA meetings. They were run by a rehab from the Blue Mountains.

Wayne and I opened up meetings at Westmead on Monday nights, Saturday nights at Liverpool, Monday lunchtime at Wentworthville and Friday night at Westmead Hospital. By this time I was about 18 months clean and it became painfully aware that it was time to do something about the steps. I couldn't maintain my recovery on service alone. I thought there was the need for a steps meeting in the Parramatta

area as the closest steps meeting was in Enmore.

I rang other people in my area to ask if they would support a steps meeting in the west. All but one was very keen to do so. There was a large showing at the first steps meeting in Parramatta but I missed it because I was away fishing (my priorities weren't quite right then). People that were there from the start to support the meeting were Wayne H, Mark A, Ronnie I, Wayne C and a number of others.

It's a very sad fact to me that Wayne C is no longer with us. He died of cancer several years ago. He was buried on the day of his turning 18 years clean.

There have been many defining moments of growth in the west - Unity days, conventions, and meetings celebrating more than 20 year birthdays. This was all made possible by the willingness of people in the West to commit themselves to service. Numerous other meetings have been opened by other people in the West resulting in growth in the area. This growth continues. Service in the West is at a very healthy point.

My personal recovery has flourished. My life has soared beyond my wildest expectations. The working of the 12 steps has been pivotal to this.

Currently this remarkable program has made it possible for me to continue this wonderful journey despite dealing with a life-threatening and painful illness. At this point I must mention my wonderful loving caring sponsor and the undying support that I continue to receive from my loving caring NA friends; some of which come to my house each Saturday so that I can continue to have an ongoing NA meeting in my life.

Michael B

REMEMBER...



NA TODAY NEEDS YOU!!!!

**SEND YOUR ARTICLES, LETTERS, CAR-
TOONS AND GRAPHICS TO:**

NATODAY@NA.ORG.AU

OR

**NA TODAY
c/- FSO
1ST FLOOR, 204 KING ST
NEWTOWN NSW 2042**

No longer a bit player

I started using very young (12) and didn't stop until I had lost my life completely when I was nearly 30. My 4th try at rehab I finally surrendered and started attending meetings. This was in the 90's, and I found NA refreshing in many ways, but confronting at the same time. At that point I had child protection investigating me (probably rightly so from my fuzzy recall) for neglect, I was living in a run-down commission flat which had been pretty much trashed, and there were drug dealers and gun runners at my door, not to mention the regular raids. Fear of the door-knocking, sleeping with weapons, terrified of the police and welfare, running out of food - but then begging, borrowing just enough to feed my kids and habit when I messed up my drug business. All had become normal life to me.

When I joined NA, I was most inspired by a guy who had just got his 10 year cake who'd said "Today I am a player in my life". I never forgot that but there were lots of battles to fight before the skies cleared. My neighbours were either drug customers or 'colleagues' and suddenly I became a pariah - I still put my new tags on my keys with pride but was now afraid of those I used to consider friends - people who now saw me as some kind of threat.

My windows were thrown at with all sorts of rubbish and I boarded them up. The housing authorities said I didn't have a good enough reason to be relocated. So I tried to find work but hadn't finished school, having had my first child at 16 and had no 'marketable skills'. I applied for entry to University as a mature aged student and was rejected. It was like living in hell, but without the painkillers I was so used to. NA got me through. My ex was still using; though we'd broken up I couldn't bring myself to kick him out. I tried to get him & his new girl to meetings but he came stoned twice then stopped.

Finally, in desperation, I moved to the country. I cut off all relations with my old playmates which was harder than I'd expected. I worked menial jobs, but now I had an almost decent, though run-down, private rental home. But I'd married an ex-user (clean when we met) who then started drinking heavily and things started to slide. Eventually he lost all semblance of sanity. I kept working; scrubbing floors, retail jobs, and went to Uni through 'Open Universities' (no entry criteria) online while he sat at home playing computer games and drinking. I got good marks and then finally got accepted to 'real Uni' where they accepted my online courses as credit!

At the end of 1st year I was astonished to get dux of 5 campuses! I never even thought I'd pass. My ex was threatened and enraged. He started to assault me and threatened to kill me and the kids if I left him. I'd broken one of the basic rules; too early for a relationship, especially with another addict. The kids and I fled further into the country side. I went for help from a domestic violence shelter but they said I didn't need it – I presented well and should be able to cope alone. I wasn't all that impressed with this level of service but in the end they were right: I moved near to the University and slept with lights on and a knife under my pillow again for quite some time.

But slowly things started to change. I stayed off the drugs and kept working. After getting dux, I was offered research work. Then work as an administrator in a welfare organization. I started to get to know the old 'enemies' in a different way; cops and social workers became friends whom I could try to make understand how things were on the other side. I started fighting for change in the agency. Better treatment for families afflicted by addiction. After 18 months alone, I met my first 'normal' boyfriend. He listened in wonder (and sometimes I think, doubt at first) to my stories about my past life but didn't judge.

Then I got a job improving care in medical, psychiatric and welfare services at a bigger organization. I ended up on the Dean's Honours List, then got Dux again (for research) and am now doing my thesis. It's been quite a journey but my message is this. You can go from squalor and desperation to joy and success. It feels amazing. You can have your mind back and you might be surprised what it can do (think how well we learn to survive on the streets). You can find true love; I've been with my 'straight' partner nearly 3 years now and we are getting married this year! Life's not perfect, but the serenity prayer still helps me get through that. I will always be grateful for NA, for all that I learned and all the support they gave. I would rather commit hara-kiri than use heroin again (or the myriad of other drugs I was on) and I can tell you that no matter how low your rock bottom is, you can turn it all around.

I may be older than those I started Uni with, but by honours I was teaching classes for the undergraduates! I still don't self-disclose, except to very close friends, as society is just not that evolved yet. But my research is now all about trauma and recovery from it (from the alienation, the abuse and revictimization and the changes to the brain) and I can finally say I am 'a player in my life' now. I am writing the script, not playing a bit part. If you're a newcomer please remember there is so much hope. The sooner you start the better and even when it seems impossible – do not give up. I cannot believe the life I have now, just 12 years later (a year less than I used). I thank the Universe daily for my blessings and try to see challenges as opportunities.

I still struggle with some of the shame from my past deeds but know that I am working every day to heal myself and my family as well as continue to work to help others like myself. Service to NA or the community is the key- it makes you have to be strong and it makes life beautiful and rewarding. DON'T EVER GIVE UP giving up! You will not believe it until you try it but by God it is incredible- we can rebuild and we

can become some of the leading lights in a dark world because we understand the pain of others. God bless all and good luck. My story is just one of many but it is important because you can go from less than nothing to whatever your heart desires.

Blessings All
J from Vic

*"Even if you are
on the right
track, you will
get run over if
you just sit
there."*



"it's all about surrender"

Psychic Corner

Once again, famed psychic Orac is here to answer your deepest, darkest, recovery questions.

Just write in to the NA Today (natoday@na.org.au) with your burning questions and we'll ask Orac to dig deep into the spiritual realm and tell us the answers. This month we have several questions from our unwary readers.

Dear Orac,
Where is my watch? I lost it a week ago and now I can't find it.
Thanks,
Jodi F.

Dear Jodi,

Wow. Wish I could help but that would be ENABLING YOU and Orac doesn't do that. You're going to have to bring this one home yourself. And learn some personal responsibility while you're at it!

Good luck with that,
Orac

Dear Orac,
How do I know if I'm ready for a relationship in recovery?
Ben H.

Dear Ben,

First, there's a brilliant quiz on this very topic in a back issue of the NA Today. Why don't you read all the back copies on the internet until you find it, take it and see if you have a good laugh?

Second, ask yourself this one simple question,

“Do I think that being with someone is what I need to be happy?”

If you answer yes, then go tell your sponsor you have more work to do. If you answer no then why bother? Relationships are hard work.*

Good luck with that,
Orac

*please note that Orac is in a jaded and cynical mood this evening and possibly not in the best mood to be answering letters.

Dear Orac,
I've been clean for a bit now but I still steal stationary from work. What do I do?
Help please.
Anonymous

Dear Anonymous (is that you Frank?)

Orac has to admit to not always being the spiritual paragon you see before you today. I too was a bit of a klepto in early recovery. And early to middle recovery too perhaps. I forget (Ahem). Anyway...the thing is that now you're aware it's not the right the right thing to do then it's going to be constantly bothering you when you do it. So don't. Personally I find not doing that stuff much easier than doing it these days purely for peace of mind. Much like not using is now easier than using. Grasshopper.

Good luck with that,
Orac

**What: Northern Sydney Area
Men's Day**

When: 16th April 2011

**Where: Narrabeen Tramshed,
Pittwater Rd, Narrabeen**

Time: 10.30 am to 6pm



Spirit of Unity 2011

@ New Venue: Diamond Beach, NSW

11th, 12th & 13th November

Bookings go live July 1st

<http://www.savesou.blogspot.com/>



2011
Greater Queensland Area Convention
Brisbane: May 6, 7, 8
Trinity Centre, Church Street
FORTITUDE VALLEY

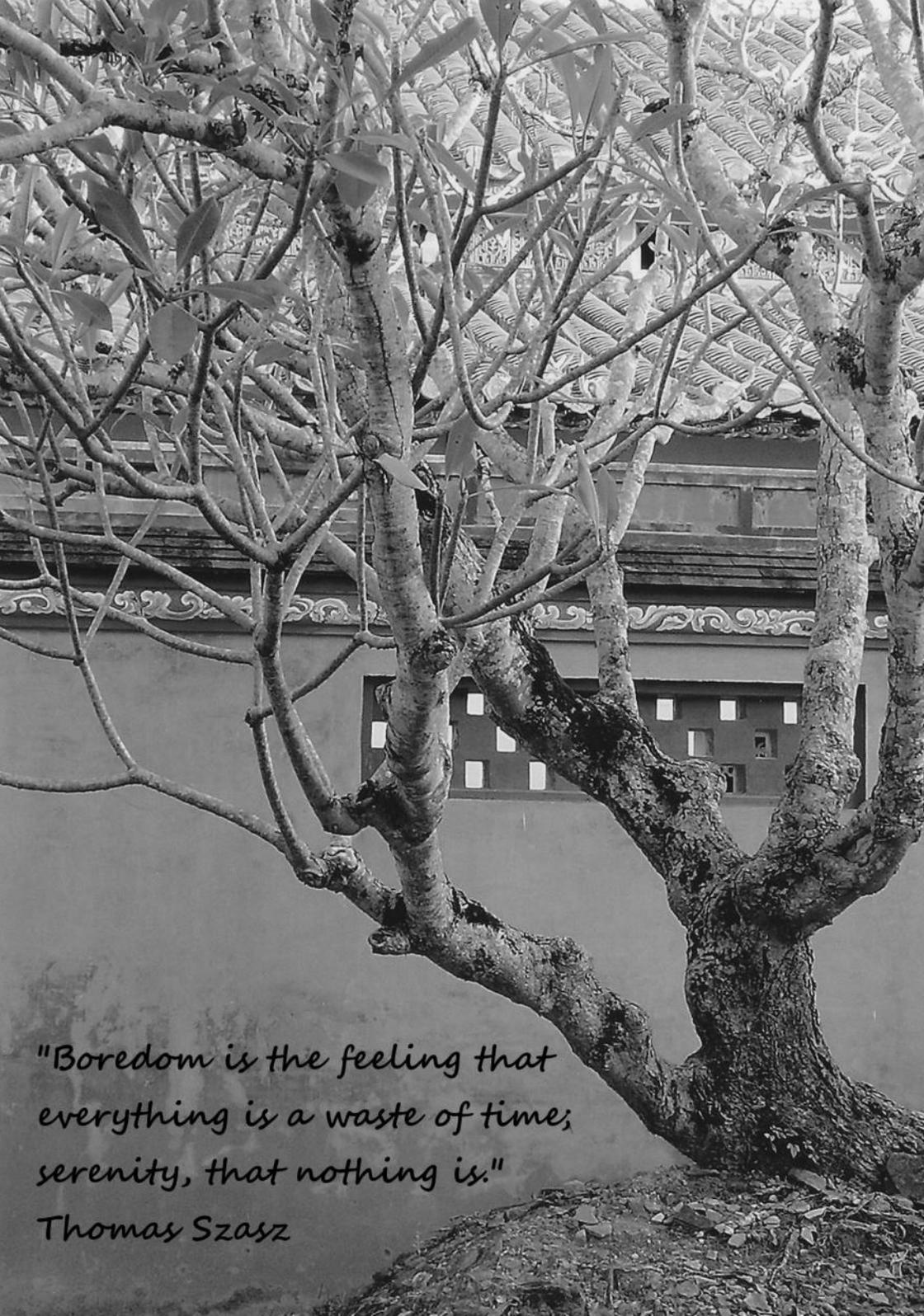
FELLOWSHIP SERVICE OFFICE

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*"Boredom is the feeling that
everything is a waste of time,
serenity, that nothing is."*

Thomas Szasz

**NA National Hotline
1300 652 820**

**All other info @
www.na.org.au**