







# NA TODAY

Free Publication

Of The Australian Region

February 2017

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**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 "any 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](mailto:natoday@na.org.au)

Fellowship Service Office  
Unit 34, 112-122 McEvoy St  
Alexandria NSW 2015  
P 02 8399 2453  
F 02 8399 2454



**NA NATIONAL HELPLINE**  
**1300 652 820**

**FOR MEETINGS IN AUSTRALIA  
AND OTHER INFO**

**WWW.NA.ORG.AU**

## Dear Readers

I hope March's issue of NATODAY finds you strong and inspired. If not, I hope you can find some encouragement within these pages! Once again, as always, a very special thank you to all members who have contributed their experience, strength and hope to this edition. This magazine depends on members taking the time to create and share their work. It is a very special way to carry our message inside our fellowship, and also to people who might not know much about addiction and recovery and the effect that NA can have on people's lives. We can only keep what we have by giving it away, so please keep writing, drawing and submitting so we can keep up this great work.

Also I would like to say a very special thank you to Caris from Melbourne

*Hello,*

*I just wanted to say thanks for such a great little mag, NA Today, and the latest edition is so wonderful!! I always try to pick it up and read it when I see it in meetings, and it's always good, but this last one was really touching and with such an awesome cover too! I will definitely be passing it on to my friends and telling people at the meetings I go to how fabulous it is:)*

*Thanks for putting it together and all your work*

*Cheers!*

*Caris, from Melbourne*

who wrote in with her lovely words of appreciation for last issue. It's an honour and a privilege to be able to do this service, and that's certainly reward enough, but acknowledgment and support is always welcomed by myself and our committee.

This issue has a few great inclusions on relationships in recovery, a topic which can be very controversial within our fellowship. I would like to share that my first relationship back in recovery at 19 months clean was an absolute disaster! I went through unbelievable emotional pain when he left me (thank God he did!), but I survived. The next one I wanted to do it right and had beautiful and pure intentions, but that didn't work out so well either, because my defects were still super strong and completely baffling. I gave up on "being good" for a long time, and really acted out on relationships, using them like a drug, until I reached my rock bottom once again (clean!) and reached out for help to my Higher Power and to the 12 Steps, and humbled myself to accept outside help.

Unsurprisingly, our amazing program helped me heal and grow and now I am able to have a loving and fulfilling relationship with someone that I chose, not chosen by the emptiness of my disease.

That's just my story, what's yours?

*Yours in Loving Service*  
**Tess S**

# HEALING THE INNER DEMONS

I recently read an article that said the founders of the fellowship would turn in their graves if they knew about the self focus that plagued meetings these days.

It reminded me that the original idea of recovery was not to blame others for what had happened to us but to take responsibility for the harm that we had caused to others during our using. I was subsequently reminded of the part in our basic text which tells us that self obsession is the core of our disease.

So much these days we hear recovery coming from the point of view of working on “myself”. Healing “my inner child”. “Bringing up issues, looking at them, dealing with them” whatever that means to you. Recovery begins to sound like it’s all about self and what we can get rather than about the fellowship and what we can give. I bet if we did a study, there would be an inverse relationship between the amount of time spent analyzing self and the amount of time devoted to service.

I was at a meeting recently where a person 18 years clean said “it doesn’t matter how much I give back, the debt cannot be repaid for what I have been given, so I will keep doing service”. He does lots of service and always has, even since he was new. Then on the same night I heard a relative newcomer say “no one holds their

hand out to me, the old timers around here are not doing their job”. I think the old timers are doing their job, but I don’t think that particular newcomer is.

*I think the authors of the steps got it wrong when they said “the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using”. I think it should have said “the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using and to keep what you have by giving it away.”*

From the day we arrive in NA we are our own responsibility. While we are not expected to do it alone, no one else is going to do it for us. That newcomer was thinking “where is mine?” Well it is out there, but he has to go and find it him self with the love of the fellowship like the wind at his back. He needs to give to receive as much as any old timer does. We are all equal in this program.

From time to time I hear things like “I’m just not getting enough out of this”. I also recently heard someone say, “I am sick of the same people being asked to share all the time”. And again, it is not uncommon to hear many different laments that imply people’s parents are the reason they used drugs. The common theme in all these comments is a passive form of a victim mentality, a lack of personal responsibility assuming that others

should be taking care of them, that they are empty units waiting to be filled rather than genuine participants who are contributing to the fellowship through their decisions and actions.

Meetings and recovery are the exact opposite of that. Taking full responsibility and making recompense for the damage we have caused.

When we used, we lied, stole and did whatever we could to get stuff for ourselves. We had inner demons, secretive parts hidden from the world.

*The attitude that “someone else will or should supply it for me” needs to change inside.*

We confront it more and more deeply as we go along. It makes sense now to become self supporting with the loving boundaries of an NA community. With the help of a loving God and other members we can meet many of our own needs.

*Healing the inner demons is about giving not receiving.*

Toby Z

-reprinted from July's edition of NA  
TODAY from 2006



## 3rd Step Prayer



Take my will  
& my life,  
Guide me  
in my  
recovery,  
Show me  
how to live.



# International Events



For members who like to travel, the Victoria Convention of NA (in British Columbia, Canada) is coming up in May of this year.

There are always plenty of NA events going on all around the world.

Head to the NA World Service website to see a regularly updated list of events via area.

<http://webdata.na.org/events/>



## JAKARTA NA CONVENTION 2016

August 19 - 21, 2016

Lion Tower - Jakarta, Indonesia

Our Theme this year is "Freedom Inside"

The Jakarta NA Convention 2016 is on August 19-21, 2016. Now is a good time to book your cheap plane tickets.

We would love to share the spirit of recovery with fellow recovering addicts from all over Indonesia and the rest of the world.

Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia, the urban city where the lights never go out. You'll meet guys and girls from all walks of life who are clean in NA, working the NA program.

See <http://www.na-bali.org> for more updates!



# I 'M not an addict!

THATS WHAT I SAY WHEN I THINK  
I'VE GOT THIS GAME LICKED  
CAUSE IM ALWAYS CRAZY  
JUST LIKE A POKE IN THE EYE  
UNLESS I'VE LOST IT ALTOGETHER  
THEN THERE'S NO TIME TO CRY  
LOST ALOT OF FRIENDS NOW  
CAUSE THEY'RE NOT WILLING TO TRY  
OR DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY  
OR THEY'RE JUST LIVING A LIE  
THEY HAVEN'T LEARNT HOW TO  
MAKE IT STICK  
JUST WANT TO SIT AROUND  
PLAYING THEIR GAMES AND THEIR  
FLICKS

TAKE A MAMMOGRAM OF LIFE  
SEE HOW MOST HANDLE THE SQUEEZE  
AND SEE THAT INSANITY FITS  
THATS WHAT IT'S LIKE THIS DISEASE  
YOU'RE TRYING TO FIGURE WHAT'S  
WRONG  
CAN'T SEE WHAT'S IN FRONT OF  
YA  
TAKING HITS FROM THE BONG  
FOOL SEE YOUR MIND AS A  
WANDERER  
THERE'S SO MANY DIFFERENT STYLES  
AND TYPES IN RECOVERY  
LOOK THAT SHIT UP ! I DID - OR  
ELSE  
LIFE WOULD BE DONE WITH ME

IN THE SYSTEM - MEMORIES TWISTING  
SOME PEOPLE WISHING THEY COULD  
GET CLEAN WITHOUT CYNICISM  
IT'S NOT A MYSTERY HOW HARD IT  
CAN BE  
BUT IF YOU GOT INTO IT SEE  
THAT THERE'S A WAY TO BE FREE  
I'M NOT DEBATING THAT YOUR MIND  
RACING  
WON'T TAKE YOU PLACES THAT  
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN  
BUT THE CHOICE IS YOURS  
IF YOU DO OR DON'T PUT IT DOWN  
AGAIN  
START EACH DAY ANEW  
SEE HOW MUCH YOU CAN DO  
WATCH AS SMILES MAKE YOUR FACE  
BRIGHTEN

CAUSE IF YOU'RE FUCKED  
THERE'S HOPE OUTTA THE GLOOM  
IF YOU SPENT YEARS QUESTIONING  
(LIKE I DID)  
WHY AM I LIKE THIS?  
AND THERE'S NO ANSWERS  
MAGICALLY APPEARING  
-CALL SOMEBODY!! AND GET TO A  
MEETING !!  
ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS PUT YOUR  
ARSE IN THE SEATING

-ANONYMOUS



# Loneliness

Recently, I became reacquainted with a sense of loneliness. One, I am happy to say, that is in no way as extreme as it has been in other times in my life. It has however, been a sobering reminder all the same. It has reminded me of the impact it has had on my psyche in times gone by. It has also given me a sense of gratitude that this is now not the case, and hopefully never again.

I still find it strange, that I can feel lonely in a group, and on my own, and connected in both circumstances also. I connect through giving, as suggested, and I have found over time, that it works.



Connecting with myself however, has always been more challenging. It has required the same action, only inwardly, and the outcome has not always been as obvious or immediate. The results for me, appear to be revealing themselves over time, and they are not entirely as I expected. I think I have made friends with loneliness, accepted it perhaps. I acknowledge it as a part of me today, and don't fear it like I used to. I don't expect it to be there always, and I don't expect it to vanish entirely either. I believe that I cannot know connection, without also knowing disconnection.

I now believe that a sense of loneliness is something I can be grateful for, a motivating sensation if nothing else. An opportunity, if I want it, because it pushes me to connect and seek opportunities to contribute to the greater good. That I think, is a beautiful thing.

*A thing of meaning.*

- Anonymous

# Relationships in recovery

## *Part 1: Sarah*

Relationships in recovery can be one of the biggest stumbling blocks for many of us. The emotional rollercoaster of meeting someone and then, perhaps, losing them again, can be a major challenge that tests the stability of the foundations we've built. I had recently entered into a relationship with another recovering addict, after working the steps and being single for a few years, but I had found it presented serious challenges. Beyond the commonly suggested things, I was interested in getting more detail about other member's experience, strength, and hope about relationships with other members. I met with a few members in my local fellowship, who have had a variety of different experiences with relationships with other addicts, to ask them about their experience. The following series of articles are written in the hope that they might foster the sense of identification, and hope, which is the heartbeat of Narcotics Anonymous.

The first member I spoke with, Sarah, was a mid-thirties single Mum with 9 years clean time. She shared with me that she first got into a relationship with another member in an earlier recovery. Neither her nor her partner were working an active program of recovery, and the relationship

developed quickly, as she fell pregnant some 6 months later.

Like many of us, relapse is part of Sarah's story. During her pregnancy her partner relapsed, became abusive, and the relationship ended soon after. She later relapsed herself. Negotiating over the children in family court whilst being in active addiction lead her to suffer a mental health breakdown and attempted suicide, which was the rock bottom which brought her back into her present recovery.

Despite her experience with her last partner, she coyly revealed that she entered into another relationship within the first year of this

recovery. When I asked her why, she said that she was so attracted, either in love or in lust, to the other person, that she felt (and still feels) like it was "unavoidable". Later on she confessed that she revered her partners—that she was obsessed. She felt annoyed with herself, in retrospect, that she "allowed physical attraction to put me in a position of less than". She said, "I was just so smitten... I wanted it so badly to work."

I mentioned to Sarah that I had trouble behaving like an adult in relationships, and she could relate. "I think I'm still quite immature" she said. "We

have to learn everything in recovery, including learning how to have healthy relationships... The people you are closest to cop the worst behaviour”.

Despite that her more recent partner and her were both practicing an active program of recovery in the beginning, she feels like the relationship became very co-dependant and enmeshed, because neither of them had completed the steps, or were aware of their defects of character, or kept in close as contact with their s p o n s o r as they had when single.

She wishes she had worked the steps in full before

It was because of the pain this second relationship caused Sarah that, after a while, she decided to up her program. She also sought out help through other twelve step fellowships, where she learnt how to “detach with love..., and [set] boundaries”. Through the growth she experienced, she determined that the relationship was unhealthy, and ended it. “Upping my program was the instigation for the end of my relationship. I knew I couldn’t keep on lying to God and to my sponsor”.

Working the first step in particular became key for Sarah gaining freedom. “I was trying to exert power and control over another person’s mind; I was trying to manipulate another person so that they were happier and I was happier. I was not allowing him the dignity to just be who he is... I found it hard to be powerless over the other person. I tried eeeverything! ... I often failed!” Her freedom came, she said, when “eventually I realised I just need to worry about myself. I accepted powerlessness over the other person”. Sarah stated that, “I had to decide to just accept the person as they were, or not, and I decided that I couldn’t”. She

entering into a relationship. Sarah felt like she behaved codependently, as her emotional mood often depended on her partner’s. “If he was upset then I was upset”.

mentioned that, even as sad as the end of this relationship



was, “I didn’t pick up. He didn’t pick up”.

One of the challenges she faced was opening up in a close knit community like NA, and in meetings, where they both had mutual friends. “You want to protect and honour that person, and you don’t want to embarrass them, but you also need to be able to be honest about what’s going on for you”. Sarah shared that her relationship with her sponsor became key in dealing with this second relationship; it was important, she said, to “find a sponsor you can be honest with...”



I was dismayed that it took so long to get over him, and there is still part of me that wants it to work. But because I was honest, and I prayed, and I journaled, and I talked with my sponsor, and I kept using the program and I feel a sense that it was the right thing to do. I’ve come to peace with it”. The fact that her sponsor shared a similar experience “made it ok”.

Sarah sometimes seemed sad when recalling her relationships. “I wanted the happily ever after”, she said, “I’ve just always wanted a husband and a family..., but I haven’t been able to create that. Addiction has played a big part in that”. However, what also

came through was a calm acceptance. As she said, that acceptance came “thanks to the program”.

*Turn to page 16 for Relationships in Recovery Part 2*



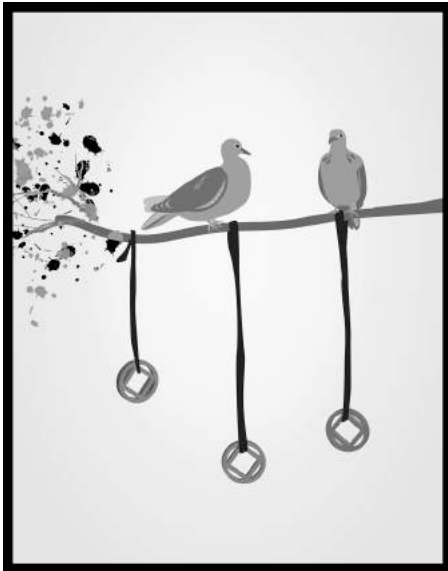
*Dean The Painter from Manly, NSW*



# A quick thought on relationships

“RELATIONSHIPS are hard.

I am grateful to have been through the pain I've been through, and stayed clean, because all that growing prepared me to be able to have a relationship with someone I actually really like, not just putting up with



Artwork by Michelle G, California, USA

crap from someone I can't respect, out of loneliness or desperation. I couldn't do it without a God of my understanding though.

*God is really the first relationship in my life, then the friendship I have with myself, then my partner third.*

This doesn't mean I don't love my partner, it's just that if I can't keep right with God, I'm going to screw up eventually, because my disease thrives when I don't practice my spiritual program.

*And if I don't take care of myself, EVERYONE suffers, not just me.*

So even when everything fails between us, even when we can't talk to each other through the hurt or anger, I'm glad I still have someone I can lean on, and I'm glad because I believe they are looking out for my partner too. All I need to do is crouch down, put my hand on the earth, look up to the sky, and pray, and I know everything will be alright.”

- Anonymous



Vanessa S. from Perth, WA

## HELLO, MY NAME IS NICOLE AND I'M A GRATEFUL RECOVERING ADDICT.

I dragged my stripey bags into a treatment facility, having been kicked out of my mother's home at twenty seven years of age. The last song I heard on the radio was "It's the end of the world as we know it." A more appropriate song could not have played on the radio at that time.. Little did I know, my life was going to be transformed into something I could never imagine possible.

I spent eight months in that rehab after over half my life of using drugs, trying to escape my reality. For six months while I was in the rehab, I was on leave from my "amazing" job as a bottle shop chick, not knowing life had so much more in store for me.

After the first few weeks of induction phase, I was finally transported to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting on the rehab bus. I remember it foggily, Monday night, New Farm meeting. It was daunting, having to stand out the front of what seemed like a sea of people and try to make sense of my jumbled, racing thoughts. One particular thing sticks with me though.

*After the meeting a member said to me, "Just Stay!" And that is what I have done!*

Everyone says "Keep Coming Back!" However instead of leaving, I just stay. So far it is working for me - I'm coming up to my two year anniversary, thanks

to the God of my understanding and the Narcotics Anonymous program.

I still do a meeting a day, have a Secretary position at my home group and an Area Service position as Activities Chair. I have recently changed sponsors and have just completed my first round of the "Twelve Steps!" I am forever grateful to my old sponsor for helping me through the first eleven steps and built my first relationship in which I could trust, love and grow. I am very excited to begin a new relationship with my new sponsor and I am very much looking forward to sharing my next round of steps with her! If it wasn't for Narcotics Anonymous, I wouldn't have a life worth living.

*I have transformed from a dead eyed, scared, little girl into an open-minded and caring woman who has the ability to trust in others and myself, to love and be loved. I finally have relationships and the connection I have long yearned for.*

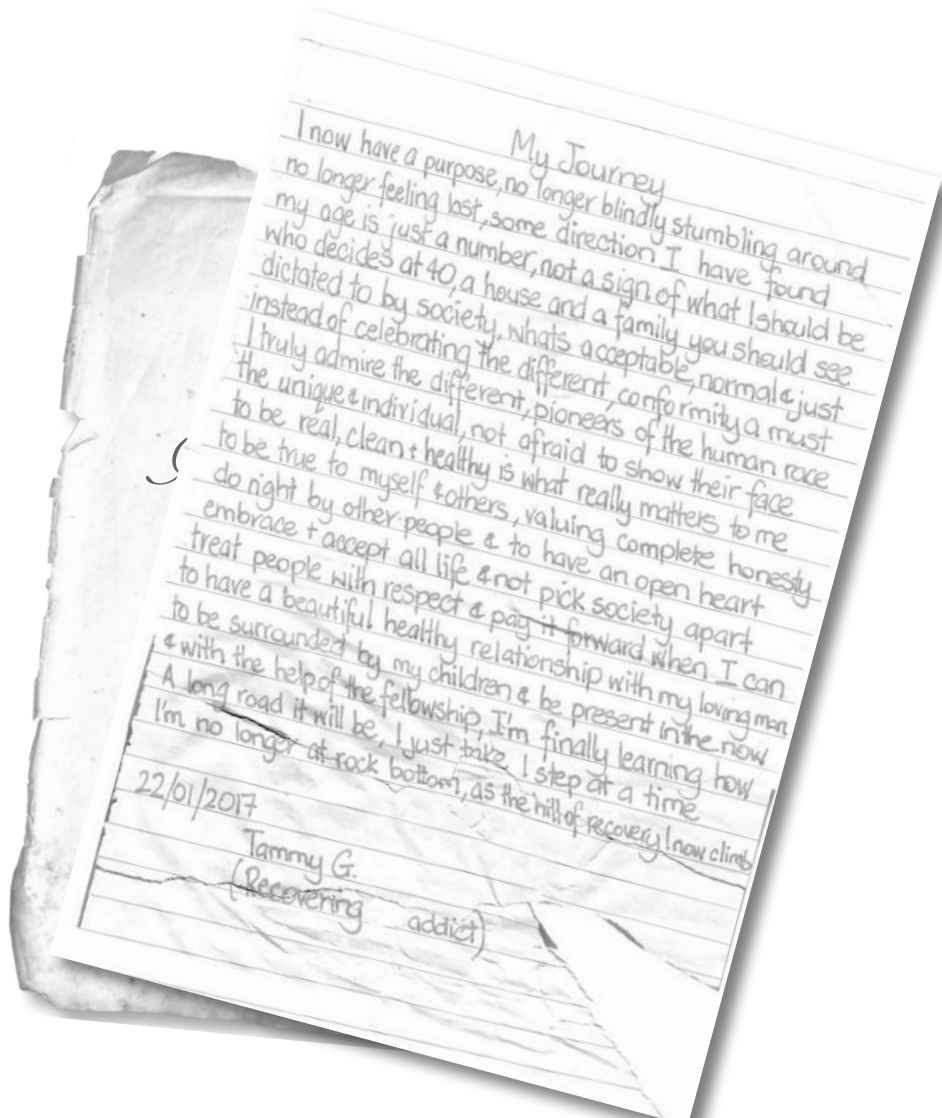
I am currently studying and life isn't always peachy, being a poor student. But I know that the God of my understanding has much more in store for me in the future. The most amazing thing is that I now have a future! I never imagined being able to study again, I thought I had damaged

myself too much from years of substance abuse. However I now know, anything is possible, if I have and work a program.

So if you are reading this, I will say what was said to me at my first meeting..

Just stay! Stick around, don't leave before the miracle happens!

YILS, NICOLE X



# Relationships in recovery

## *Part 2: Steve and Jenna*

My sponsor believes that relationships are the single biggest cause of relapse, particularly in early recovery. A received wisdom that many sponsors, mine included, recommend is waiting one to two years before thinking about a relationship. Personally, I have been immensely satisfied that I worked the steps and got to know myself before I began looking for a partner, but, even then, after recently having entered into a relationship with another addict, I had found it highly challenging. Because of the difficulties and challenges I was discovering, I set out to talk with members in my local area about their experience, strength, and hope about relationships with other addicts in recovery, and I hope what they shared with me can be of help to others.

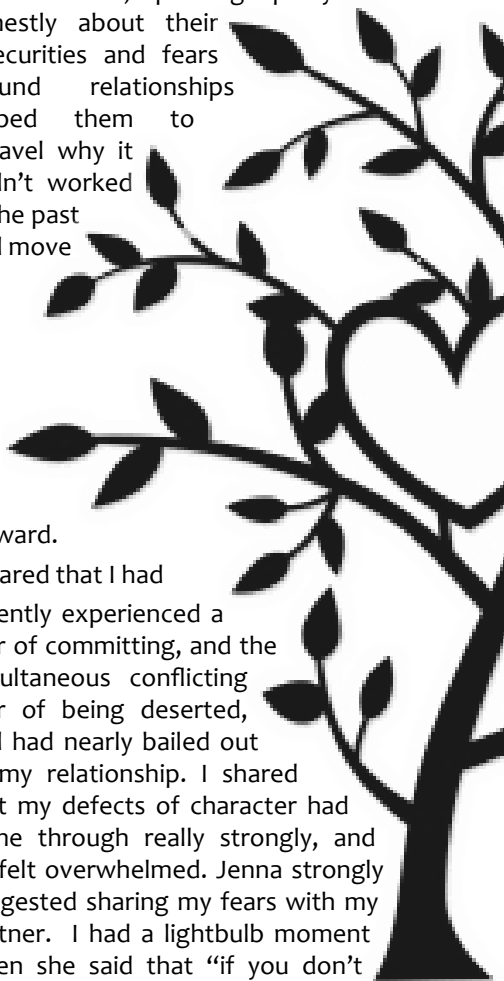
I spoke to Steve and Jenna, two addicts with 30 years clean time between them. They have been married for 6 years, and have two children together. It has not always been a smooth relationship. “This is our third time together”, they said. The first few times they still had issues they needed to deal with.

A recurring theme which came through very strongly from talking to Jenna and Steve was the importance of communication for successful relationships. Steve said that “for the

both of us it was about communication. We were both really scared. Me especially of the intimacy... I was so confident with the opposite sex, until I made a commitment”. Jenna added that “and for me it was the insecurity. Like I never felt safe in relationships.” Both Jenna and Steve agreed that the fear and insecurity, which is at the core of the disease for many of us, needed to be worked through. For the both of them, speaking openly and honestly about their insecurities and fears around relationships helped them to unravel why it hadn’t worked in the past and move

forward.

I shared that I had recently experienced a fear of committing, and the simultaneous conflicting fear of being deserted, and had nearly bailed out of my relationship. I shared that my defects of character had come through really strongly, and I’d felt overwhelmed. Jenna strongly suggested sharing my fears with my partner. I had a lightbulb moment when she said that “if you don’t





go through it with this girl, you'll go through it with another". Jenna said "we've all got things that shit us about the other person". She then asked, "can you live with those things that shit you for the rest of your life? Cause you can't change that person. That's what you've got to think about".

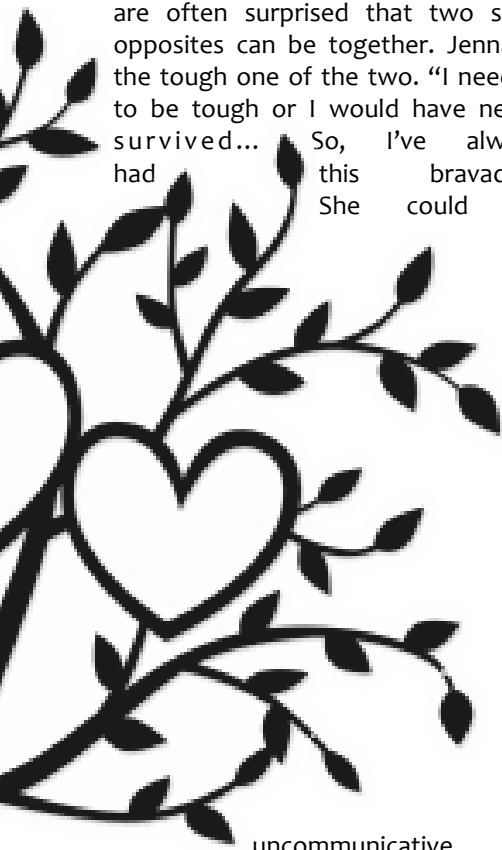
Jenna and Steve are very different people, and they told me that people are often surprised that two such opposites can be together. Jenna is the tough one of the two. "I needed to be tough or I would have never survived... So, I've always had this bravado". She could be

Steve". However, they balance each other out—"I needed to soften and he needed to harden up" Jenna said.

One of the reasons for Jenna's bravado was that she had been in relationships which involved verbal and physical abuse. "I'd never been treated well by a man". Steve was the opposite of the sort of guy Jenna dated in her using. Over time, and with the help of outside counselling, she came to trust him. Steve states that, for his part, being a 'softie', he had to "learn how to put boundaries up, and keep her accountable" in her commitment to their relationship. "It's not a perfect relationship, and we have our differences, but we make each other accountable, don't we", said one. "Yea, we pull each other up", said the other.

Steve told me that he had struggled in relationships in his early recovery. At the core of these issues was love addiction, he thought. Steve found much support from regularly attending an NA Men's meeting. "The Men's meeting's great I reckon. I think being a male we don't share as honestly as we would with just the boys". Steve said he had learnt how to deal "with insecurity, by sharing about it. For men, voicing that they are insecure, in the early days, seems like a weakness. But by sharing the character defect it seems to lose its power". Despite this help, however, some older cleaner members at the Men's meeting of NA could identify with Steve's issues, and suggested another fellowship, where Steve went for three years. "That stuff

uncommunicative, but w a s actually quite emotional—"but not many people know it". Whereas Steve said he was always a bit of a softie, even as a kid. "I've always been easy going, people pleasing,



could have been dealt with in NA, but it's not the proper forum to share about it", Steve conveyed.

Both Jenna and Steve state that the NA program had been a massive help for their relationship. Both are heavily embedded in the NA community. "We always went to meetings all the time... With NA people we are on a deeper level when we have a conversation... I love that you are the same as me and you will get me", Jenna demurred. Also, they added laughingly, "if we've had a few weeks off [meetings] we start to get on each other's nerves!"

Their relationship benefited from the self-awareness which came from NA. Jenna admitted that her program had

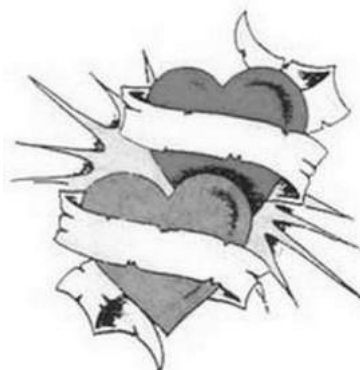
not been perfect, at the start "I didn't have sponsor or work the steps, and I'm not perfect. Steve... tried to get me to do the steps, but when he stopped asking is when I decided to!" After she started working the steps she said "I could look more at myself and my defects".

In concluding, both admonished that "the most important thing is not to pick up!" Jenna added "I always say 'do not pick up over a fucking man!'" Jenna and Steve helped me to clarify my own relationship, and I was grateful they had taken the time to talk with me.

*Relationships in Recovery Parts One and Two were contributed by an anonymous member who wrote them after conducting interviews of Fellowship members for NA Today. Their names have been changed with their consent, to protect their anonymity.*

*If you have any thoughts or stories to share about your experience with relationships in recovery, please feel free to email them through to:*

*[natoday@na.org.au](mailto:natoday@na.org.au)*



# My reflections on doing service

They say service keeps you clean, but sometimes it feels like if you can stay clean through service you can stay clean through anything! At times I've been hopeful, challenged, bored, angry, inspired, grateful, frustrated and equal parts full of despair and hope. Sometimes things can just seem to take forever to get done, people never seem to agree, and there are as many opinions as there are eyelashes, and that can be really discouraging. But when the system works, it's a beautiful thing to behold.

Who could think, a bunch of clean drug addicts can work together and co-operate to put the needs of other people first? Who would believe that people who used to formerly lie, cheat, steal and rot will take time out of their lives to help other addicts, without even being paid? For me, money cheapens the whole idea of service. I get SO MUCH from doing fellowship service that can't even be measured by physical standards. I get a warm, spiritual glow come over me, even after all we do is disagree with each other for 5 hours about something that may or may not even come about. I learn so much about myself and what makes me tick through my reactions and expectations on other people, and I get opportunities to practice my spiritual program and be a better version of me in a safe

and forgiving environment. I surprise myself, how well I can take criticism, how I can stand up for what I believe in, how I can sit through sometimes frankly intimidating behaviour and hold my own, and how I can forgive other people as people forgive me, and laugh and hug and join hands in fellowship at the end of it all anyway. I've learned new skills and been able to offer my talents, doing what I love, and giving of myself to the fellowship that's given me everything.

I'm grateful to do service, and I recommend it to everyone, whether you have 1 day or 1000 days. Keep coming back!

-Anonymous





# No Through Road

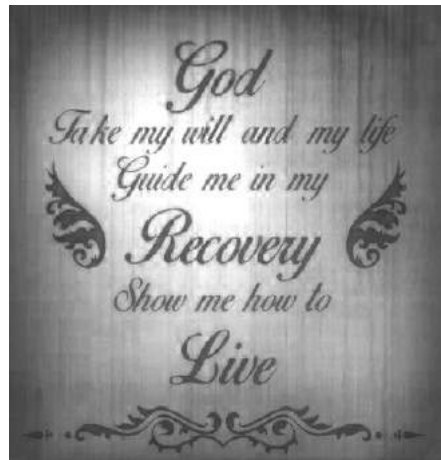
When you find you can't get through  
 No matter what you try to do  
 Everything you push falls down  
 Every try gets turned around

If nothing works, then just be still  
 Try surrendering your will  
 'Cause God is never far away  
 Just waiting there for you to say:

"Please take my actions and my thoughts,  
 Help me to do that which I ought!  
 Please take my life and take my will  
 And please, my spirit's well refill,  
 So I can better do your work,  
 and learn how not to be a jerk!"

Our Higher Power always hears,  
 and has a chuckle at our fears.  
 So if you're puzzling where to go  
 Try Step Three, and then you'll know!

Many of us have said..:



# ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Aotearoa New Zealand - Australia - Bahrain - Cambodia - China - Guam - Hawaii  
India - Indonesia - Iran - Japan - Kuwait - Malaysia - Maldives - Nepal - NERF - Pakistan  
Philippines - Saudi Arabia - Singapore - South Korea - Thailand - Viet Nam

A Network of  Communities

***Due to significant growth of the NA Fellowship in the Asia-Pacific region, a zonal forum was set up to serve, help and connect NA groups within this large area.***

The APF holds workgroups to help members develop the NA Fellowship reach in their areas and to provide guidance and strategies for carrying the message and administering their groups effectively.

They also put out a newsletter every few months with articles summarising APF workgroups, as well as articles from members telling of their experiences attending workgroups and participating in service for the APF.

“This forum is intended to complement the existing service structure of NA.

***Goals to encourage, develop and support NA in this part of the world:***

- a) To encourage and support translations of NA literature into our languages.
- b) Encourage and support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts within Asia Pacific.
- c) Encourage, maintain and support communication among NA members, communities and Regions within this part of the world.”

*Quoted from the APF Statement of Purpose (reprinted with permission from APF newsletter edition 35, October 2009)*

WANT TO KNOW MORE? WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED? HEAD TO THE APF WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION, AND ALSO CHECK OUT THE BACK CATALOGUE OF APF NEWSLETTERS FOR A DEEPER INSIGHT INTO WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY THE APF AND NEWS ON CURRENT APF EVENTS!

<http://www.apfna.org/>



# DEFORMED

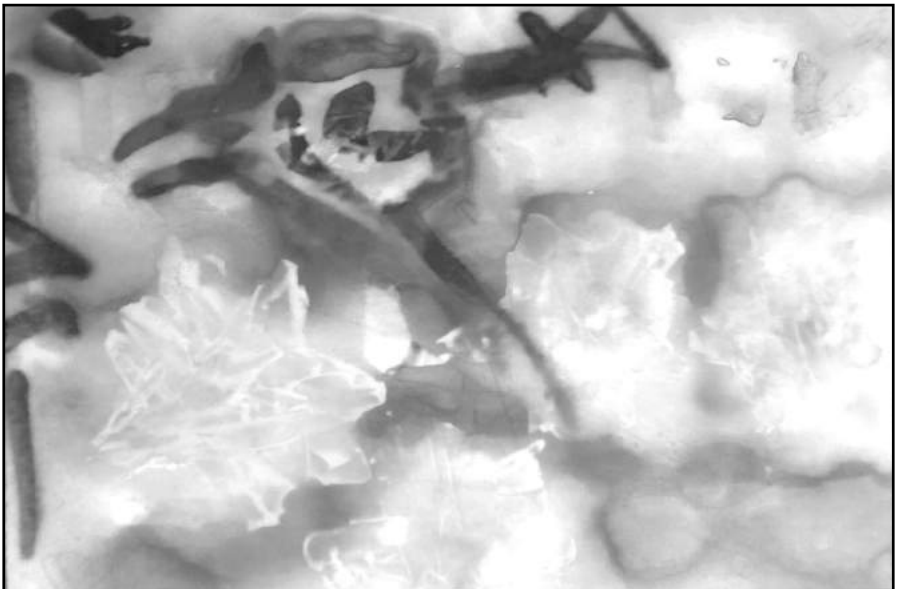
YES BORN DEFORMED  
FROM THEN ON, I PERFORMED.  
CRYING OUT LOUD  
BY SEEKING ATTENTION.  
ONLY NOW ITS KNOWN  
CREATING MILES OF TENSION.

PAINED AND BLACKENED SOUL  
JOY CLAWING AND THRASHING  
DEPTH FELT IN MY BOWELS  
FOR THIS GOD, YOUR GOD  
HAS NO LIGHT, NO REAL PATH  
FUCKING ACCEPT ITS UNFAIR.

TELL ME, SHOW ME  
ITS NOT PRETENSION  
AN INDIVIDUALS GAIN  
SELF CENTERED AT ALLS CORE  
HOPING SOME SUBSTANCE REMAINS.

CORNER OF MY EYE  
I WATCH AND OBSERVE  
MANY LOST COUNT IT IS  
INFLICTED WOUNDS AND WORDS  
CLICHE SAYS IT IS WHAT IT IS  
WHY? IS ALL THATS LEFT.

HAPPENS FOR A REASON, THEY SAY,  
FAILING TO SEE  
WHAT LESSONS ARE LEARNED  
OFFERED TO MANY LIKE ME  
OH GOD, MY CORE BELIEF  
ONLY REMAINS YOUR RULE  
GOLDEN IN ITS TRUE FORM  
TRANSCENDING ALL POMPOUS RELIGIOUS  
RULE.  
DO UNTO OTHERS AS WISH DONE UNTO YOU  
BENEVOLENCE IN ACTION THE NA WAY.





JOHNNY REALISES HIS DRUG HABIT HAS BECOME QUITE EXPENSIVE

Reprinted from July 2016's edition of NA Today

# MEDICATION: A CONSCIOUS DECISION

I have come to realize that my psychiatric condition is not a character defect, nor does taking my prescribed medication constitute using or relapse.

My psychiatric physician is well aware that I am a recovering addict, and knows my history of drug abuse. I have come to understand through my support network in NA that taking my medication does not mean that I am weak in character. I am not only an addict, but I have a psychiatric disorder that requires me to take medication.



I have faced—and overcome—difficulties in our program as an NA member who takes medication. When I first started attending NA meetings, I was told I needed to be honest, so I was. When I shared, I “put my life out on the tables.” At that time I did not think this was a big deal, so I shared about my recovery situations that at times involved my medications and my psychiatric issues. Since then, I have been more discerning on what should be shared with my sponsor and what should be shared “in the rooms.” Initially, no one said anything negative. In fact, I was welcomed with support and felt accepted and loved. However, after a short period of time members commented in meetings about how taking medications while in recovery conflicts with the principles of the program and that depression and anxiety are character defects and

choices. As these members spoke out, some other members began to comment in support of their opinions. The issue of medication was discussed, and a few quite vocally insisted that psychiatric medication should not be taken. I began to feel the weight of a stigma, and I began to believe they were right. I had discussions with different NA members about how and why I should get off my medications. I felt weak and guilty for taking medication, and I soon gave in to their seemingly logical information and guidance. Therefore, I stopped taking my medications. Nothing good came of this. As my mood elevated, I began to experience psychotic symptoms and suicidal ideations. After getting regulated once again on my medicine, I sought out more experienced members in NA. Once again, I feel the support and love NA has to offer.

I do not believe this is an isolated issue; there are other NA members who are on medication and struggle with these same problems in NA. This article was not written to lay blame on anyone, but rather to shed light on my experience with psychiatric medication in NA. My hope is that by my sharing my experience, others who are struggling with this issue will be helped and know that they are not alone.

**JOEL M, ILLINOIS, USA**

*Reprinted with permission from the NA Way Magazine, April 2016*

# one keytag...

One Sunday when we were in the refugee camp at Calais, France, we were building a shelter for an Iranian family. One of the Iranian fellows congregating near us sat talking with me in his broken English. He offered me a smoke of his joint, which I obviously declined, and we continued to talk some more, with

him saying that unless he made it to England he would kill himself, as he had no other options. Such is the desperate and hopeless nature of the Calais Jungle.

In my efforts to offer this wretched man some hope, I said he couldn't know what would happen, that you never know how life can change. "Look at my husband," I said, pointing to my husband as he built a shelter. "He was a heroin addict, homeless, in jails and hospitals, and now we have a family, health, and love in our lives." The man went quiet, and then asked me if I had heard of NA! I said I had, but he didn't believe me until I showed him my NA keytag—and then he started crying. It turns out that this guy—this one man in 6,000+ living in the refugee camp

whom I happened to talk to—had been six and a half years clean in Iran. He fled Iran and found himself in the



harsh end of humanity, his last hope, the Calais Jungle; and in desperation he relapsed. Now, at this darkest point when his faith was lost, his higher power reminded him that he is still involved, still a part of the NA Fellowship. Six

thousand people in that camp, and our ragtag little crew ended up talking to him. It blows my tiny mind. When has the phrase "never alone, never again" been more apt?

Since then, we have worked with other NA members from London, Brighton, and other locations in England and with several French NA members. We obtained Farsi literature and started meetings there in the refugee camp. Today a daily meeting with about 25 "local" members who live in the camp continues to meet.

*-Amanda A, Lancashire, England*

*Reprinted with permission from April 2016's NA Way,*

*available online at*

[www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

# EMOTIONAL MATURITY

I recall hearing a guy say that he didn't have a happy childhood but he had a long one, and could identify with that.

Changes have come so slowly in my recovery that I don't feel all that different than when I was a newcomer, but the world and the rest of the people in it if have gotten a lot nicer over the years and reality has become something I have no problems with accepting and adjusting to a day at a time.

*I have gotten out of the centre of the universe and just handle what comes my way as it comes along.*

I have found some worthwhile things to do and am no longer very concerned about my own interests or how I am feeling. I've found that happiness comes when I no longer care if I'm happy.

When I start to feel upset or uncomfortable about something now, I tend to look at my attitudes and find that they are not as rational, practical or positive as they could be. Reality has become a refuge rather than a threat. I can now sustain gratitude and not just take things for granted.

I guess I live a lot of my life through habit now, mostly good ones that are pretty easy to maintain. When things don't happen as I might expect, that just adds a bit of spice to life.

Life now seems almost too good to be true, but I accept that it is.

Devonport, Tasmania, where I live, seems like paradise to me and I have come to realise that, if my attitudes and outlook on life are really positive and sane, and I am leading a good life, most places on earth might well seem that way to me now.

*I once thought that being happy and content on an almost continual basis was impossible on this earth, but this has come true for me in the last few years.*



There are a lot of aspects of life where we all eventually go over the hill, but this is not the case for developing emotional maturity, and other aspects of spiritual growth where there seems to not be a limit. I used to think that I wouldn't want to be 100% sane as I rather enjoy my quirks, but now think it would be rather nice. But I guess we will always be "*all here because we are not all there.*"

*Jim - Tasmania*

*2009 NA Today*

**REMEMBER...**

**YOU CAN ONLY KEEP WHAT YOU HAVE BY GIVING IT  
AWAY...**



Send your articles, letters, cartoons and graphics to  
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or

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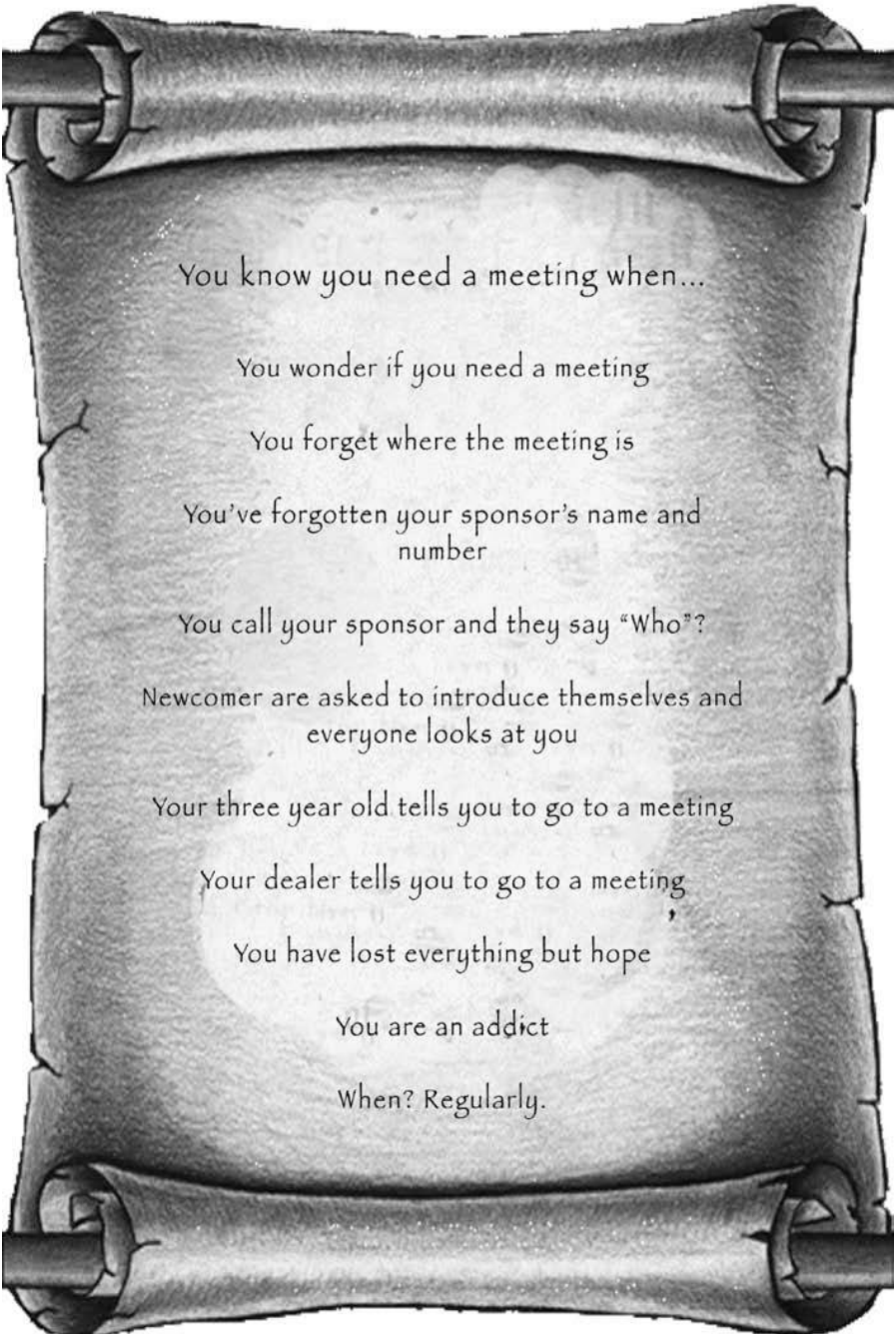
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Unit 34, 112 - 122 McEvoy St

Alexandria NSW 2015

**BE LIKE SUPER GIVING POTATO.**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING  
YOUR SUBMISSIONS.**

A black and white illustration of a scroll with a textured, parchment-like surface. The scroll is unrolled and held by four metal rings at the corners. The text is written in a simple, sans-serif font, centered on the scroll. The scroll has a slightly wavy, aged appearance with some creases and a dark border.

You know you need a meeting when...

You wonder if you need a meeting

You forget where the meeting is

You've forgotten your sponsor's name and  
number

You call your sponsor and they say "Who"?

Newcomer are asked to introduce themselves and  
everyone looks at you

Your three year old tells you to go to a meeting

Your dealer tells you to go to a meeting

You have lost everything but hope

You are an addict

When? Regularly.