



# NA TODAY

Free Publication

Of The Australian Region

November 2018

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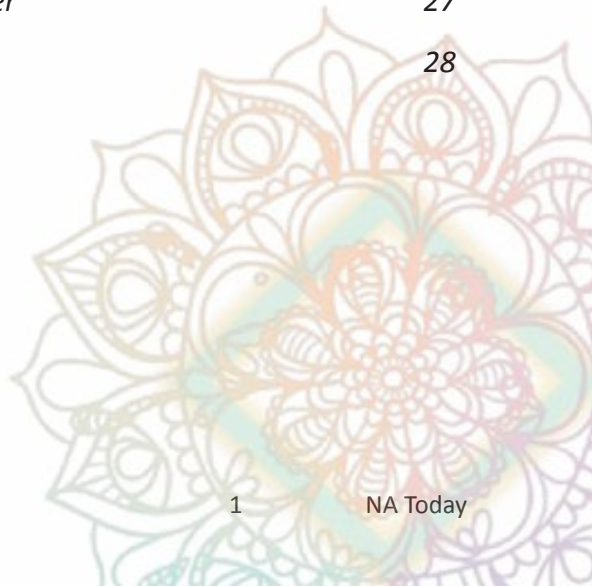
## Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous

We are glad that you have made it here, and hope that you decide to stay. It is important for you to know that you will hear God mentioned at NA meetings. What we are referring to is a Power greater than ourselves that makes possible what seems impossible. We found that Power here, in NA, in the program, in the meetings, and in the people. This is the spiritual principle that has worked for us to live drug-free a day at a time; and whenever a day is too long, then five minutes at a time. We can do together what we could not do alone. We invite you to use our strength and our hope until you have found some of your own. There will come a time when you too may want to share with someone else what has been freely given to you.

-From IP #22

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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**

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

**FOR MEETINGS IN AUSTRALIA  
AND OTHER INFO**

**WWW.NA.ORG.AU**



# Dear Readers

Hi everyone! My name is Heath, and I'm an addict, and I'm the current acting NA Today chair. The previous chair, Tess, has stepped down due to uni and work commitments, and is now our newly created "Publishing Chair", handling the technical wizardry, and leaving the humdrum admin to yours truly.

As with every other issue I've been a part of, I'm very proud of this one. We have a sub-theme on:

## THE ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

as their convention and admin meeting is approaching in Feb next year in Bali. Being from WA, we always have a large contingent attend the Bali convention, and I know for a fact that a group from WA is attending the APF. I was blown away by how many people came from all over Australia to the Bali convention, and was hoping to shine a light on the APF in order to encourage a similar support for this vital service and fellowship event.

The article from Sue K about developing support for women in the Asia Pacific Zone was a real eye opener, and emphasises just how important it is for the Australian region to get involved in and support the APF.

We also have a slightly revamped committee structure at NA Today, as we have created a role for NA Today "agents". Agents chase down content from members in their local area, in the hope we can generate content from all around our region (as Tess and I had

just about probed every avenue in WA we could for content in the past year!). This has so far been a great success, and we have articles from Coffs Harbor, the Gold Coast, Sydney, and Adelaide (and of course WA). If you're interested in getting involved with the NA Today subcommittee and being an NA Today agent we'd love to hear from you at [natoday@na.org.au](mailto:natoday@na.org.au).

We've also gotten our blog post up and running this quarter. You can subscribe to NA Today blogs by going to our national website, [na.org.au](http://na.org.au), looking for the literature/NA Today tab and subscribing. We'll send an article about every month, or a cartoon, and keep you up to date with what's going on in our fellowship. We'll also send you digital editions of the mag, and you can download back issues.

I'm blown away by the talent this fellowship shows, and this issue is no exception. We have humor, poetry, and graphic artwork which shares the experience, strength, and hope of our members. Hope you enjoy it as much as I have!

*Yours in Grateful  
Loving Service*

*Heath W*

# International Events

Australia is a remote place, surrounded by sea. It can seem like the rest of the world is very far away. This section is to let our members know that no matter where you are in the world, NA is always there. Some of our members report deep spiritual growth from seeing what it's like to be an addict in another country. Others may be leaving the country for the first time, and still others enjoy the ability to travel clean, where they never could before. No matter how experienced with travel our members may be, we are never alone, worldwide.



## NORWAY- Trysil

Ski and Recovery

11th-17th March 2019

For more information please contact:

skiandrecovery@outlook.com

Event Info: <https://nanorge.org/arrangementter/>



## IRELAND - Galway

WACNA Convention

1-3 February 2019

Venue:

Galway Bay Hotel

Salthill Rd Lower, Upper Salthill, Galway,  
H91 W295, Ireland

Event Info: <https://www.na-ireland.org/wacna-feb-1-3-2019/>



## USA-New Jersey

Multiple Years Conquering Fears Convention

30th December-1st January 2019

Venue: Renaissance Woodbridge Hotel

515 US Highway 1, Iselin 732.634.3600

Contact: bascna.nynl@outlook.com

<http://newyearnewlife.org/>

# H & I LETTER

My name is Bez A and I am an addict who is currently incarcerated for commercial supply and proceeds of crime. I got eight years and I'm eligible for parole in the middle of May 2019. I have been around Sydney and south coast fellowships for a while. I feel positive about recovery, and I am looking forward to living life clean. A close friend of mine who has multiple years clean has been my rock. We started and NA H & I meeting a few years ago. He organised the H & I side, I took care of rallying the many addicts that were interested.

I believe some things happen for a reason, this is a classic example of a power greater than myself.

*Spiritual non-religious power I choose to believe in.*

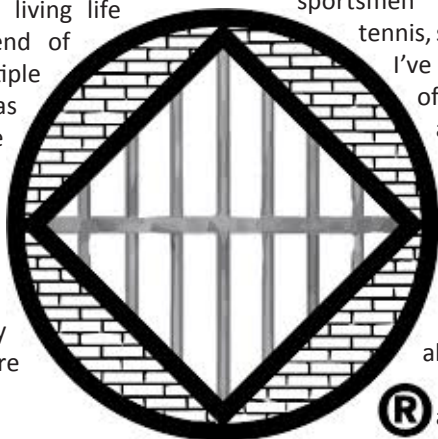
Another blessing has come my way. Another meeting started here about eight weeks ago. Every Friday I keep banging the NA drum LOL.

It's been awesome getting that H & I support, and gently pushing myself and other men towards recovery. I don't know why it's taken 10 years and rehab for me to get serious about building a

spiritual foundation and start to recover from the disease of addiction.

I have been fortunate enough to be around publishing and magazines for over 15 years. I was very successful. I was a high school dropout and well known as the class clown but a talented sportsman and loved cricket, tennis, squash, rugby league.

I've played A-grade in all of the above. Put a bat and ball in my hand and I thought I had great self-esteem. Academically I was bright but had no confidence. Looking back now drugs and alcohol were given, and at a very early age.



*In 2013 I made some poor decisions and I'm still paying the price.*

I found the theme and topic [of the last issue] were fitting for where I am - **The Body in Recovery** - as I've just come out of a very dark place. Stuck in depression with a lack of motivation and losing the will to live. I can't believe how much I've changed in a few months with a few simple things I've learnt in recovery. I am training consistently, have changed my diet, am reading and writing daily and have a positive lifestyle.

- Bez A

# GLBT Meetings

Since coming into recovery I have struggled to have a sense of identity. When I came into the rooms last year, I had no problem admitting to myself and others that I was in fact an addict. But since entering recovery I have had so much trouble growing on that sense of identity. I had lost my way so far I didn't know what made me happy or even what kind of person I am.

I used to be very involved in the GLBT community before my addiction manifested and being involved always gave me a sense of being home. It was somewhere I could be free to be myself without having a fear of judgement, feeling less than or that I was being judged for being attracted to the same sex. It's been a long time since I've had that feeling but I've found it again at the GLBT N.A. meetings.

This meeting has helped me gain a sense of identity again. It's given me a place where I can share honestly and openly without fear of judgement. I've been able to share my darkest or brightest and deepest thoughts on the floor which has allowed me to connect with people who have had similar experiences.

I didn't feel comfortable enough to even tell the men's meeting the day my partner of six years offered me his hand in marriage for fear of homophobic responses on my magical day, I even hid the ring. I had to wait a few days until the GLBT meeting and only sharing with my support network the great news prior.

I went through my first ever breakup from my fiancé in recovery and the only place I felt I could express my experience honestly was at the GLBT meetings. It was great to have the whole meeting offer me support with understanding where I feared I wouldn't get that at other meetings. Eight months later, the same meeting helps all the obstacles I've faced while learning to date in a healthy way all over again.

- Ryan



*Anyone may join us,  
regardless of age, race,  
sexual identity, creed,  
religion, or lack of  
religion.*



*From the NA White Booklet, Narcotics Anonymous -  
Copyright © 1986*

*Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.*



# Her

She said they're only voices in my head,  
She said that I'm not better off dead.  
She said I'll always be okay,  
She said the day will come when your free to have fun,  
She said it's gonna be okay,  
She said she'd stay,  
I said I'm not okay,  
She said she'd love me anyway.  
She said that I was so strong,  
that I always had the guts to keep carrying on.  
She told me she has life and that I could have it too,  
She taught me a thing or two.  
She told me it's never been my fault,  
She helped me to see that it was never really me.  
She told me I'm not wrong,  
She gave me the love to keep me along.  
She was the first to really see me,  
She gave me her time not her money.  
She hugged me and held me,  
She helped to unfold me.  
She shaped me into the woman I am,  
She's been there when I needed her to be,  
She's left me now and that's Ok,  
She's helped me to be free,  
Now I'll show someone else their key,  
to give them what was given to me,  
to help them set themselves free.

- Boni N

# Alice's story

Today I am 6 months clean for the first time since I was 14.

6 months ago I was in a psychiatric ward in Lismore. I was homeless; I had just come off maintenance and I was receiving electric shock therapy (ECT). The hospital had tried their best with medications and other treatment for a couple of months but nothing else worked so as a last resort they tried ECT. I received 13 sessions of it in total. I was in absolute shock at where my using had taken me. When I entered hospital two months before, I was in psychosis. I was emaciated (weighing 40kg) as I never had the funds or desire to eat whilst using drugs. I deteriorated into a catatonic state.

*The lights were on but no one was home.*

I also had a lot of PTSD going on. I was too unwell to go to rehab and I'm so fortunate that some members from the fellowship brought me into a detox. The detox took one look at me and sent me into hospital.

The gift of desperation takes various forms and mine happened to be in that hospital. I am a slow learner. I was introduced to NA 4 years prior to being homeless in that hospital in Lismore unable to function and barely alive. When I was initially introduced to NA I identified and felt fairly safe. I sort of felt I had found my tribe. However I was still running on my own will, and picked

and chose parts of the program. I still had this huge fear of being open and getting vulnerable, letting people into my world. I kept myself on the outer.

*I had a belief that once you got to know me you would realise what a defective person I am and abandon me.*

I was happy to be there for others, but still too scared to share many parts of myself.

Although by this stage I had hit various rock bottoms, there was a lot of evidence that I was powerless and totally unmanageable.

*Every drug I tried I got heavily addicted to.*

At the end of the first 17 years of my using in Melbourne I became homeless and no longer able to hold down work and I was broken internally. Yet I still couldn't accept that I was powerless over substances and I didn't fully surrender to the NA program.

When I came up to a rehab in the Northern Rivers about 4 years ago, I left the rehab early and unfortunately found what I thought was a new solution, my drug of choice. For me this dragged me to new lows, more 'yets', new levels of misery and despair. I lived a sub human existence, exceedingly isolated and my whole life revolved around the getting and using of drugs. I was barely able to get my shit together. I lived in filth

because I spent all my money on gear I couldn't afford food or ciggies so I'd walk the streets collecting bumpers. I hated myself. All my morals and ethics went out the window in the pursuit of getting on.

*I didn't think of how my actions and lifestyle affected others. I was very tunnel visioned.*

It was painful knowing that there was a solution - being NA, which I saw working in many people's lives, but once I was deep in my addiction I thought that that solution was unattainable for me. I surrendered to using and was resigned to the fact that I probably would die the way I was living. I used to wake up annoyed that I was still alive and then figured out how I would get on that day. This existence lasted a number of years and I really was lucky to survive. Since coming back into the rooms many people kept telling me that when they saw me in my using they genuinely feared for my life and they thought I wouldn't survive. This is a good reality check for me of where my using takes me.

So 6 months ago, once I was out of psychosis and able to string sentences together again I knew I had to do everything differently.

*I asked the hospital if they would let me go to NA meetings daily and I'm soooo grateful they said yes.*

I got a sponsor and started doing the steps. I spent 4 months in total in hospital and did a meeting a day, then got into supported accommodation. I continued to do one or two meetings a day and got a few service positions. For the first few months the fear and shock of where my using had taken me was extreme and my anxiety was through the roof, I was exceedingly grateful to be alive.

*Gradually my anxiety decreased over time and I was just so grateful to be able to laugh and smile.*

I was so grateful to connect with others, to have a safe space to live and do recovery; to have food in the fridge and have another shot at life. I learned how to share what was really going on for me and get vulnerable. I started to make friends in the rooms.

*The fellowship loved me back to life.*

After a while my time was up at the supported accommodation and I moved back to Byron Bay where I now live in a share house with others in recovery. The Byron fellowship welcomed me back with open arms. I was fearful of going back to the rooms here as I did some of the worst of my using here and had a lot of shame. But people were just happy to see me well and giving recovery a good crack. My life is pretty simple at the moment yet I feel so much

gratitude and joy. I am creating new memories in Byron and learning to have fun in recovery.

*I do a fair bit of service as the rooms saved my life so it's nice to give back.*

I still do one or two meetings a day and step work with my amazing sponsor whom I speak to daily. I have developed some genuine friendships and my family in Melbourne are relieved as they no longer fear a phone call finding out second hand that I'm dead from an overdose. They actually look forward to speaking to me and I treasure that hugely.

*If we have found NA we are the lucky ones. It's a gift I treasure.*

I want to thank the people in the Byron, Lismore, Ballina and Bangalow fellowship that truly loved me back to life. I am only clean because people accepted me as I was, made me feel welcome and OK to come back.

Alice D.



## REMEMBER...

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



Send your articles, letters,  
cartoons and graphics to  
[natoday@na.org.au](mailto:natoday@na.org.au)

or

NA Today

c/- FSO

Unit 34, 112 - 122 McEvoy St  
Alexandria NSW 2015

**BE LIKE SUPER  
GIVING POTATO.**

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





South Australian Area of Narcotics Anonymous  
2019 Convention

# **GIVE IT AWAY NOW!**

**Adelaide 29th-31st March**

**Fullarton Park Community Centre**

\$45 Weekend, \$35 conc

EFT to: SAANA BSB: 633-000

ACC: 153447289

See website for early bird offer

Contacts: Dave L 0412 249 897 Sim K 0466 399 423  
[saanaconventions@gmail.com](mailto:saanaconventions@gmail.com)

Go to [na.org.au](http://na.org.au) for updates

# 30 Years Clean

I'm about to be 30... Years clean that is.

I thought that being 30 would be fantastic, wonderful and amazing, like it was at 5 and 10 and 20. It probably still is all those things, but at the moment I can't feel it.

*I've been through some adversity that I'd rather not have, and I'm struggling to find the serenity and acceptance that usually characterizes my recovery.*

I'm sure the broad picture of my life is still pretty good, especially if you compare it to the day I walked into the rooms. Just out of prison, no money, no hope and a compulsion to use non-stop, that was destroying me. I had no job, no education, nowhere to live, no experience to draw on and an attitude that was just plain wrong.

*As time went on, and recovery weaved its magic, my attitude changed. It became more positive, I learned to laugh and cry.*

I made friends and learned to connect with people. The warm sun filtered through the cracks in my soul and made me feel loved for the first time. It was an amazing time in my life. Everything was new and exciting, even the hard bits. I drank it all in and thanked God for my new life.

But here I am at nearly 30, struggling with resentment, afraid of the future,

uncomfortable in my own skin, uncomfortable at meetings, poisoned by the spear tip of very close personal betrayal.

You know when you are young and riding a skateboard and everything is going smooth, then the wobbles start, the death wobbles they are called, when your balance is interrupted and things that normally sail along downhill now seem very dangerous. In recovery there are death wobbles. The red flag moments of negativity when you succumb to resentment and malice and you can't wish well for people who have harmed you. It radiates through other areas of your life and the poison from the spear tip leaves you unable to right the skateboard back to smooth. That is where I am. I am running worse than I have for 30 years and it's scary.

But I am terrified of using again. Using was the worst part of my existence, because every day I woke up out of control, never really knowing what would happen next.

*The depths of my pain in using were constant and I never want to go back, no matter how difficult the adversity.*

But in the end, none of us are ever out of the woods.

I know some of the answers to my dilemma but I don't seem prepared to commit to them. I cannot forgive. I cannot accept what has happened

and move on... just yet. I have drawn clear boundaries. I know what is OK and what is not. This is a big step up on some people. Some of the things that definitely need to be done are being done.

pain and I really believe that those small actions make the difference in the end. Hopefully I make it to 40 and I'll be able to tell you a very different story.

- Anonymous

*Enough meetings, is the primary medicine. Keeping connected with peers is the other.*

I do service and try to act like an adult. I talk to a therapist from time to time. I eat healthily, stay fit and try to stay away from most compulsive activities.

They say time heals all wounds. I'm not sure about that. I think time changes the size and perspective of emotional



## Asia Pacific Forum Meeting

Monday 18th Feb - Thursday 21st Feb 2019

Hotel Puri Saron, Seminyak, Bali, Indonesia

*What about after the APF service body meeting?*

## Asia Pacific Forum Convention 2

Friday 22nd Feb - Sunday 24th Feb 2019

It's being held at the same hotel as above so you don't need to go anywhere.

Just Keep Coming Back

It's hard to describe the amazing work and fellowship that happens at an APF. So rather than read a long report from your RD/AD team, and with Bali being on our doorstep, why don't you head over and see for yourself.

We would love to see many Aussies there.



Info: David T 0423074597  
Web: [www.apfna.org](http://www.apfna.org)  
E: [regionaldelegate@na.org.au](mailto:regionaldelegate@na.org.au)

# SERVICE AT A ZONAL LEVEL

This is my personal experience of service at the Asia Pacific Forum

My first Conference was in Cebu, Philippines. I was wide eyed and excited to learn and experience what service at this level involved. My mind was blown as I listened to members from Japan, Hong Kong, Iran, India, Bahrain to name a few. I was enthralled listening in the workshops to the struggles within different communities – some no different to ours – others hugely so. I think because it was my first APF I was seeing things through rose coloured glasses and the reality of women not being prevalent, at the time, was lost on me.

I now understand that women are certainly not seen as equal in many other NA communities. And some might argue that this is true in Australia – to some degree it certainly is - but not to the same extent as other APF communities

My second conference was in Manila where I sat back a bit really noticing some participants, one in particular, totally unable to raise his eyes when a female NA World Service member was running a workshop. I sat and stared shocked and then noticed this as the norm during the week. It was on our

breaks after spending time together out of the conference – going for a meal etc that I encountered this particular member who I'll just say thawed out or perhaps relaxed or just got used to other male friends interacting with the few women present. I remember feeling surprised when he smiled at me for a photo ever so shyly and hesitant. I'm not being judgemental in this instance I understand this is prevalent culturally.

At my next APF in Bangkok I personally experienced being discounted, I was shocked on witnessing what I believe was men with fat wallets being given preferential treatment in all sorts of ways. This APF brought a few things to light for me – I shared lunch with a local Thai women who spoke of her difficulty attending local meetings with

ex pat males and the way she felt looked over like a piece of meat.

Again I was horrified and wondered how I could possibly be a part of a solution. I'm not sure that I can be on a big scale but I spoke about it at my Region – which wasn't an easy thing in one sense as there are a lot of ex pat men from my Region living in Thailand with young Thai women.





I have since attended another 3 APF's – it was in Manila during a workshop on challenges within NA communities that I was faced with the harsh reality of the inequality between gender. I was the note taker for the group when the RD from Nepal recounted experiences of NA women in his community. (I have permission to repeat this). He said women aren't safe – if they make it to a meeting they are often abused by the men. Going out at night in some areas is not safe and just making it to the meeting can be fraught with danger. Sometimes if there is another women there she is not kind to the new women.

Women are not seen as an addict in general, they are supposed to be in the home, cooking dinner for the man, looking after the children. To think of a women as running around the streets using drugs is not possible.

Tears streamed down my cheeks as I was listening and writing his words. I couldn't help but compare this to my own experiences coming into meetings, particularly as a newcomer - I was welcomed. I had had no idea prior to that moment what it must feel like to be a women in another country where women are not valued, not seen as an addict, not seen as equal, not seen.

Skip to the next APF in Nepal - a motion was brought to the floor to form a Women's Fellowship Development Workgroup – it was endorsed unanimously

We also had a motion to fundraise specifically for Women's FD endorsed.

A Workgroup quickly formed and we meet regularly – this is often challenging due to our other commitments and especially our time zone differences. Often one or two of us can't make the call but we communicate regularly via email.

Our Coordinator is from New Zealand, our Secretary from Brisbane, workgroup members hail from Northern NSW, Sydney, Hawaii, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Perth.

We began with our Vision Statement:

*“Our Vision is that: Every woman identified addict in the world has the chance to experience the Narcotics Anonymous (NA) message in her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life.”*

As part of the NA Communities worldwide, NA World Services and the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) we work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery to women across the globe”

We worked on our Guidelines, presented them last APF, they were endorsed and are a living document

We have our first ever Women's FD Trip taking place on the 10th of October in Dubai, UAE - so exciting

I want to thank the Australian Region for all the support given to me through the difficult and the good times when I served at Region. My service heart rests with APF these days, but I would never have had that exposure if not for Regional Service.

The next Asia Pacific Conference will be held in Bali, Indonesia (18-21st of February - immediately before the APF convention). If I can encourage you to attend (it's so close to Australia) so you can experience our unique Zone first hand – you can be an observer over the 4 days of the conference and participate in some workshops.

Go to <https://www.apfna.org/events> for more info.

I am continually learning how important it is to speak up and shine a light on issues. That our strength really is in our diversity and because of our differences when we find a spiritual way to work together we can achieve wonderful things

Sue K



*If you are motivated by Sue K's article, there are many opportunities to get involved in women's service at the APF level:*

At the next Women's FD, we will be having a face to face Workgroup meeting, which we only get to do once a year and you would be most welcome to be a part of it. This will occur during the next APF.

(18-21st of February - <https://www.apfna.org/events>).

The 2nd APF Convention will take place straight after the conference and we will have a Women's Lunch which will be followed by a Women's meeting at the Convention.

Two years ago in Nepal we held our first Women's luncheon followed by a Women's meeting at the first APF Convention. We were bowled over by the attendance – the lunch was way bigger than we anticipated and the Women's meeting was attended by more than 90 women from all over the world. Emotional to witness the local Nepalese women realise that there were other women out there recovering. I had personal chats with a local women who said the women's meeting had closed down. Because of the women's meeting and lunch the local Nepalese women realised they are not alone and it had given them the encouragement to recommit to opening and supporting a women's meeting.

If you would like to attend the lunch it would be helpful for our planning to get an idea of numbers, The link to fill in your attendance at the lunch is:

<https://goo.goo.gl/forms/hc3DKLquCU5Blni2>

There is also an opportunity in this link to pay to cover another women's lunch

There is a need to offer sponsorship to isolated women. Currently we are calling for women who are willing to offer sponsorship to other women within the Asia Pacific. If this sounds like service you could make yourself available for please fill in the attached link:

*Here are the links to the APF meeting:*

<https://www.apfna.org/apf-2019>

*For the convention:*

<https://www.apfna.org/convention>

<https://goo.gl/forms/VNX5cPt9kTOLgvby1>

Jacqui P and Sue K are the coordinators of the Women's Sponsorship Initiative and you can contact them via:

[womensAPFsponsorship@na.org](mailto:womensAPFsponsorship@na.org)

Thank you to those who have already filled in the forms – it is a slow process – this is all new and we are moving forward but wanting to create strong foundations as we go. Soon we will put the call out via a similar form to women in need of a sponsor.

Other things in the pipeline are:

*Environmental Scan; Financial Guidelines; a Little White Book with stories by women in different languages; a video – made up of photos & short clips to be used to raise awareness of women and to show isolated women they are not alone.*

If you would like to send a group photo of a women's event or meeting in your Area or short clip – look out for more info to follow soon or keep your eye on the website.

We have created a Women's space on the APF website: [apfna.org](http://apfna.org) click on Women. Keep your eyes on this space for updated info. We would like to mention our gratitude for groups who have raised funds specifically for the Women's FD.

Thanks so much.

*Our Alternate Delegate conducted some fantastic interviews with APF committee members which we will be including in the next few issues. Read on to find out what it's like to do service at a zonal level from all around the world!*

## What is your role within the APF?

Reza: APF Secretary and Zonal Delegate

Roger: APF Chairperson

## What community did you get clean in? Are you still in that community?

Reza: I am from Bangladesh and still in Bangladesh.

Roger: Aotearoa New Zealand, where I have lived all my recovery.

## What was the thing that surprised you most about the APF?

Reza: The consensus based decision making process of APF is really amazing. In addition, the warmth and humbleness of the members and trusted servants are also very heart touching.

Roger: That the conversations taking place during lunch, morning and afternoon breaks, at dinners, or during rides to NA meetings are as important as the formal sessions that take place during the APF meeting itself. There is huge need amongst many communities where NA is not freely available, where meetings do not take place on a regular basis, where there is little or no service structure, little understanding

of the Traditions and Concepts (and sometimes even the Steps) or where very little (perhaps none) of our life saving literature is available in their own language.

## How has being involved in APF contributed to your personal recovery?

Reza: I learned a lot from APF. To mention precisely – humility, patience, prioritizing principles, decision making process, consistency.

Roger: It creates incredible connections to addicts in the member communities, and grows from there to be with many others around the world. Social media and video technologies have made the experiences far richer than when I began (email only) where there was little connecting up of faces with names or email addresses.

## How much did you know about the APF prior to taking on your APF service position?

Roger: Lots. I always took interest and paid attention to reports from Regional Delegates who had attended APF (and the World Service Conference). I have been subscribed to the APF email list for a long time and always read the reports. I attended APF meetings in 2013, 2014 and 2015 as Regional Delegate, then in 2016 as a workgroup member. I was elected as Secretary at



the 2016 meeting, so attended in that role in 2017 and 2018. Considering serving as Chair has been a natural progression.

## How important is your community's participation in the APF?

Reza: It's very important for our community to participate actively in APF. As APF has been supporting us for many years, our community likes to be involved in APF in all possible ways. Many members are also actively doing service in APF as workgroup members and trusted servants. 47 members participated at 1st APF convention in Nepal. (2nd highest participation excluding the host community) and many member has already started their planning to join in 2nd APF Convention at Bali in 2019. To support APF indirectly, our community become self supported for last 04 years. All issues of APF have great significance for our community and dealt with sincerity.

Roger: Many do not know much about APF, why it exists and what it does. Very few members have an interest (or the opportunity) to serve as Regional Delegate and hence get the direct exposure to what happens. It can be difficult to justify the use of our 7th Tradition to send our RD and make a financial contribution. I believe that the concept of "we keep what we have by giving it away" can be extended beyond a personal level and apply to our Region. We are not yet truly a

world-wide fellowship with free access to NA in every country in the world.

## What would you say to someone who has never seen the work the APF does, who is considering attending an APF Forum or joining an APF workgroup?

Reza: This is one of the most amazing service platforms, provides great learning opportunity and really helpful for personal recovery.

Roger: In recent years APF has evolved significantly, from a once-a-year event with reports sent prior to the annual meeting. Now a huge amount of work takes place through the year via the numerous workgroups that meet online regularly and work throughout the year. There is SO much work to be done! I am very fortunate to live in a community with great freedoms, well established meetings and all the literature in my own language. This is not true in many parts of the world. If you are interested in pushing your boundaries a little, being of service with others passionate about our fellowship, and making a difference, please talk to your RD or AD to explore this way of being of service, pray, talk to your sponsor and give this some thought :)

# Great Gifts

I have been in a lot of emotional pain over the last few months. A broken relationship compounded by a couple of deeply hurtful incidents led me to a very dark place. It is an issue in recovery that I hear about again and again, but rarely do I hear what people do with all that pain.

The answer I have come up with for myself is threefold and none of the folds are necessarily easy, but who said recovery was supposed to be easy. Don't get me wrong, I have done my share of avoidance with sex, gambling, food, Netflix etc, we all live in differing measures however we have to, to stay clean. I'm certain we can't FEEL everything all the time. Well I can't anyway. I've tried.

*And that's what I'm talking about... trying to feel. The very thing I avoided by using, the very thing that makes life real.*

Feelings ARE facts in my opinion. Sometimes they are the only facts. I know what people are saying when they say feelings aren't facts but I think that's more to do with newcomers dealing with compulsions.

I think there are two lives we lead. The outer life, which usually doesn't change much from day to day, we wake up, have breakfast, go to the bathroom, go to work etc. But the other life, the inner life can joyful or a turbulent sea of chaos, drama and fear. When someone

ask me how I'm going, I almost always respond from the inner life, how I feel, which lately isn't good, so back to the point.

*What do I do with all this pain?*

This is my answer. It depends on the cause of the pain. If I don't know the cause, I let it wash over me. I do not resist it. I lie down quietly and feel it. For every feeling resisted I believe it grows and gets worse. Sometimes it can become of monster.

*But I think that two of the great gifts we have been given as humans are talking and crying.*

To cry the dark cloud out till the sky turns blue, even if that takes years. And to talk to people who love us, to share out pain even when we are at our worst. To accept our feelings, and ourselves, and express them through these two methods. Talking and crying... so obvious and simple and elusive.

My current upset, though triggered in the present, has a pipe and pump that go all the way back to my childhood and without allowing these emotions, I cannot dredge the cellar of my soul, which I genuinely want to do. When I am rejected or hurt or betrayed in some way, I experience a very particular pain that seems disproportionate to the situation, perhaps because the pain I packed away from my childhood and using is still there, archived in my soul

and memory and ready to be reopened. I couldn't handle it at the time, but maybe I can now, because I have some time up.

*I am safe in the program. I can lie down and take it.*

Here is the third fold of my solution. I think pain is an indicator of something wrong. A signpost that directs us to that which needs to be resolved. Many times I have had dramas or resentments or have done things, which needed to be apologised for.

*I think this is one of the other great gifts of recovery, learning how to sincerely apologise.*

Whether we are hearing it or saying it, it can have a great impact and make a huge difference to people. It can be the difference between the end of a friendship or not. It can remove severe

pain in the blink of an eye. The sincere apology is an emotional connector that brings people back together.

*Step 10 is supremely important to our ongoing sense of humility.*

Other times there are complex human situations that arise, especially in small communities like NA where the only resolution is the least worst option, but we still have a choice in how we act and deal the feelings of it. Being an adult is almost always a choice. Sometimes things can't be resolved for whatever reason, but to dredge the cellar of the soul by feeling and to try to understand the cause of the pain and repair it, is I believe, a major part of our spiritual path. A set of chemical free solutions to these experiences, not easy, but rich and rewarding – I am not afraid of what feelings may come.

- Anonymous



## NEPAL REGIONAL CONVENTION OF NA-VI

Registration : NRs. 4200 [Program & Food]

E-mail: nrecna6@gmail.com

Venue : Hotel PAUWA, Bhairahawa, Nepal

Convention Chair : +977-9808074186

Information Chair : +977-9817441200

Registration Chair : +977-9814415701

A/c No. 00527810602874000001 | A/c Name: Dilman Thapa, Bhuvan Shrestha | Bank: NMB Bank, Butwal | Swift Code: NMBBNPKA

# ILLNESS IN RECOVERY

In order to do this article I have already written much on illness and recovery. I seem unable to stop. Floodgates have opened on all I want or need to say on illness in recovery. There is so much, and in the end I really don't think it makes a bit of difference whether it's physical, mental or emotional illness/pain/ trauma that is at the core of why we identified as belonging to that group.

The one thing that possibly unites us is our fragility, our vulnerability, our humanness.

I am broken. We are. So therefore it does not mean that everyone who may be identified as having a disability might identify as belonging to the, 'illness in recovery' subgroup. Perhaps even some with severe illness might not identify as belonging to that group.

I am broken.

There is a long-term or ever present vulnerability. I sense that something is deeply wrong, or a problem that for now, renders us vulnerable humans, broken, unable to walk, fly, think, do what we usually can, and even perhaps look after ourselves in ways we might usually be able to. It is this fragility, humanness, the powerlessness, that defines us, and I think it is us, each individual, who

has the right to identify ourselves as part of this group.

As in addiction, it is each individuals' right to say, "I am an addict". It is the same in this situation and equally it takes incredible courage to say this. To identify.

No one wakes up hoping to have an illness or vulnerability that affects their daily life, and the trajectory of recovery so profoundly. Nobody.

My story was and is about removing the drugs and finding huge amounts of trauma and distress (PTSD) and concurrently, physical elements (chronic fatigue, severe food intolerances and now, ongoing serious eyesight problems that have required more than eight often traumatic surgeries and left me with a cane, ongoing issues, fear and much uncertainty).

I never thought I would end up in this place. That my recovery would be so often fractured and altered from its path affects my ability to work, to look after myself, to make decisions and worst, to often not look like a beacon of hope, a poster child for recovery.

It is humbling. It is difficult. And for me (and I think others) I so constantly wanted to be okay I want

to get up in the mornings, kick goals, do all the things suggested, make a life, be valued, have the things so often promised with support, care, guidance, fellowship and diligence many of these things become impossible. Yet it is not always true for all of us identifying and knowing we are vulnerable and struggling with an illness.

People die from cancer, people with schizophrenia, complex PTSD and bipolar, and the have times of incredible vulnerability, distress and trauma. Others suffer with ongoing pain for whom it becomes unbearable and an incredible struggle.

It's not easy. I am broken.

It is not the recovery I would've wanted. I often think that with enough support, understanding, meetings, writing (from me), talking, walking, exercise, artwork, paintwork, reading, talking to someone, I would be alright. I would recover.

I haven't always. I am broken.

Though they have been miracles, blessings and times it was easier (often with support, care, kindness), sometimes it takes so much. Those around can't understand, can't cope with it, can't manage

Sometimes I fall again, feel hopeless, pray, talk to God, cry, write a bit, forgive myself, forgive others, trying to communicate my needs, cry out of bed, keep trying all the things I know. Sometimes stop.

I'm broken. It's humbling. It isn't easy. It's difficult. And yes, sometimes it's too great a burden.

-Janis

*Just for Today  
Tell yourself  
JUST FOR TODAY*

*my thoughts will be on my recovery,  
living and enjoying life without the use of drugs.*

*JUST FOR TODAY*

*I will have faith in someone in NA  
who believes in me and wants to help me in my  
recovery.*

*JUST FOR TODAY*

*I will have a program.  
I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.*

*JUST FOR TODAY*

*through NA*

*I will try to get a better perspective on my life.*

*JUST FOR TODAY*

*I will be unafraid,  
my thoughts will be on my new associations,  
people who are not using and who have found a  
new way of life.*

*So long as I follow that way,  
I have nothing to fear.*

-Reprinted from The Little White Booklet, Narcotics Anonymous.  
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Van Nuys, CA 91409



# Party Animal



I was a party animal from the get go and took every opportunity to paint the town red. I worked in nightclubs where it was easy to party all the time. The first time I got loaded on heroin, I truly found freedom. There was something so anarchic, rebellious and willful about it.

*I was in love, a bohemian, intellectual and completely anti-establishment.*

Drug addiction was inevitable and the exhilaration was indescribable – all I wanted was to get off of my face, loaded: Numb.

*Drugs really do rob a person of everything...*

As my addiction progressed the great love of my life left me for another woman. I was evicted – many times. I

stopped seeing my family and friends because I was too ashamed. When I did see people I knew, I'd con them for cash so that I could get on. I didn't eat and lived on cigarettes and coffee. Utilities were always getting disconnected. I was always getting charged and having to go to court for this petty offence or other.

*These ugly scenes became very normal for me.*

Then there were things I had to do to pay for my habit - compromises to myself respect, my integrity and my humanity. To get on and on and on...

So, I tried to stop using drugs. I tried a thousand things - moving house, moving countries, changing drugs, cold turkey, doctors, boyfriends and everything else. Nothing worked.

*It was a vicious, grueling cycle of misery.*

I clearly remember my last day of using. I had picked up and all I had to do was spend the day at home day dreaming.

I thought about and how unlikely it was that I would ever have a boyfriend or get married. I couldn't see myself getting a real job, having a career or being a part of the world. I couldn't see myself having friends or a relationship with my family. Of having my own home to live in or seeing the world. These are the average person's dreams. But for me they were inconceivable! All I could see was a great big chasm, a void which

was waiting to swallow me up. All I could ever be was a junkie on the nod in front of the television...Where it would end? I started sobbing uncontrollably and I prayed for help.

*I went to a detox the very next day.*

They told me that if I wanted to get clean, I should go to NA. A couple of people came to the detox and talked about how they gave up using and how NA had helped them. I could see that these people were once junkies like me that we were the same. Except that they had both found a way to get out of the abyss that is addiction.

*They were living proof that I could stop using.*

I stuck around and looked to find out more about NA. I started going to meetings on a daily basis and I got a sponsor. She told me that I was okay - no one had told me that before! She looked out for me and got me started onto NA step work.

*I joined an NA group, and listened to those who had a message of recovery.*

I started doing some service by cleaning up after the meeting and going out with other recovering addicts for coffee afterwards. I did things just because I could and because I had nothing to lose. I read the blue book and the green and gold at night when I couldn't sleep. I

liked the stories at the back where other addicts had shared their story about finding freedom from active addiction.

*I kept coming back, no matter what, tried to go out for coffee after meetings no matter how I felt I kept coming back.*

Gradually my world of using started to fade, like a bad dream. I made some friends started working, found a place to live and went to meetings. In time, a long time, I managed to build a life for myself. I started to see my family again.

*All the things I dreamed about and more in time, came true.*

The thing is, those two people who came into the detox to share how NA could help shone for me, a light that helped me find the way. The NA way.

- Anonymous





# **Narcotics Anonymous®**

## **Online Meetings**

### **TO JOIN AN ONLINE SKYPE MEETING:**

- 1. Search for and add NA\_at\_home to your Skype contacts.**
- 2. Call NA\_at\_home using Skype.**
- 3. When you are in the meeting check to make sure your mic is "muted", this minimises unwanted noise and feedback. (Unless you are sharing)**

**You can also join the meeting using a landline or mobile phone. Call +61 (02) 8005 4724 just prior to, or during the meeting.**

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Just for Today (1hr)</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>7PM</b>	<b>Basic Text Discussion (1hr)</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Just for Today (1hr)</b>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>5AM</b>	<b>Ask it Basket (1hr)</b>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Steps (1hr)</b>
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Just for Today (1hr)</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Speaker and JFT (1hr)</b>
<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Steps (1hr)</b>
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>7PM</b>	<b>Just for Today (1hr)</b>
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>9PM</b>	<b>Living Clean Discussion (1.5hr)</b>

# Thank you Higher Power

Dear Reaching out,

My name is PR and I am an addict, originally from California. I am currently incarcerated in Bangkok, Thailand, at a central correctional facility. This is the main drug prison that holds over 10,000 offenders in twelve separate buildings. So far I have served one year, two months on a seven-year, two-month sentence for possession and selling a variety of drugs in small amounts. This is my first time behind bars, but I thank my Higher Power for having me arrested. The life I had ended up living was very dark and an extreme expression of the disease of addiction that I have been familiar with most of my life. Even with so much to live for, I had let my using take me to the point of no return. It took me to a place where it seemed like a much more logical choice was to just go all the way with the downward spiral until I did die, versus going through the challenge of owning up to the truth and facing the wreckage of my past and present. In other words, coming to prison has ended up being the best thing that could have happened to me, and it truly saved my life.

Fortunately, there are zero illegal narcotics here, so I have used the time so far to revolutionize my relationship with God and take on a serious new beginning in my quest of recovery through the literature of NA with another member of the Fellowship in my building. He is from Iran, with limited English skills, so our daily meetings revolve

around language study while we pick apart wisdom, stories, and principles found in such books as the Sixth Edition Basic Text, Living Clean, and, of course—this newfound Reaching Out newsletter that my mom prints out and sends to me periodically. Being able to read about other firsthand experiences that are similar to mine really makes us feel connected to the NA reality. Of course, those who are going through much heavier sentences provide me with a dose of gratitude for the mercy that God did show me around my own case. It could have and should have been so much worse.

So I have been taking on this whole experience as an undeserved second shot at life that I likely would not get again if I ever returned to the using life. Finally, I have reached that point where my life truly depends on the program, a level that I have heard about so many times throughout my previous participation in NA meetings all around the world. It's a simple equation that I have surrendered to: NO NA = NO LIFE. There's much more that I have to share, so hopefully this can be the first submission of more to come. Until then, I look forward to more recovery inspiration from this great forum of Reaching Out. Thank you, NA.

PR, Bangkok, Thailand

*Reprinted with permission from the January 2018 issues of Reaching Out*



Today I am grateful to be 9 years clean.  
To face the disease and get through the other side one day at a time.  
To know the fears of my emotions and tackle them as best as i could at the time.  
To go through all the highest high's and the lowest low's yet still be in recovery.  
To have both succeeded and failed in service yet still be accepted for being me.  
To be welcomed back in the fellowship after my breaks and M.I.A.'s  
To forgive and have been forgiven for all the shit I have done whilst staying clean.  
For the sanity, growth and clarity between the ears when I plough through the steps.  
For the empathy and understanding from my sponsors and peers.  
For the courage not to give up or give in, even at the pearrest shape.  
For members loving me at my worst, unconditionally.

*That my hope has changed from a  
wish to a faith.*

*That I can never be perfect, but yet  
perfectly imperfect.*

*That I can give without rewards.*

*That I can love without strings.*

- Aaron B



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR  
ARTWORK ON THE COVER OF  
NA TODAY?**

**PLEASE SEND THROUGH AT YOUR HIGHEST  
RESOLUTION FOR  
CONSIDERATION TO:**

**NATODAY@NA.ORG.AU**



FOR  
DYLAN

This says HALTS.  
It's a recovery  
word (which  
stands for Hungry  
Angry Lonely Tired  
Stressed). I painted  
it years ago for  
my first sponsee.  
If you look, you  
can see the NA  
logo (diamond  
in a circle) in the  
background.

Craig D