

NA TODAY

Free Publication

Of The Australian Region

November 2019



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 TODAY IS ALSO LOOKING FOR NA TODAY 'AGENTS' WHO REPRESENT THE MAGAZINE AND SOLICIT CONTENT FROM MEMBERS IN THEIR AREA. FOR MORE INFORMATION GET IN CONTACT WITH US VIA THE EMAIL BELOW.



**NA NATIONAL HELPLINE
1300 652 820**

**FOR MEETINGS IN AUSTRALIA
AND OTHER INFO**

WWW.NA.ORG.AU

Dear Readers,

The theme of this issue is *'The Ways We Work the Steps.'* Note the plural. Personally, when I first got clean, I was probably a bit of a NA Nazi. I had made a mess of recovery a few times and, when it finally started to click, I assumed that, if you weren't doing it like I was, you were doing it wrong. Luckily, through working the steps, I've become less arrogant and a little more open minded. I also realise now that these old ways of thinking aren't the best way to reach newcomers and carry the message. In recovery, I've learnt to be flexible, compassionate, accepting, of both myself and others.

It's still often very challenging: getting the balance between discipline and tradition, on the one hand, and open-minded respect and receptiveness, on the other.

What I love about the NA program is how we find our unity in diversity. Even though there are broad trends, suggested things, and shared experiences, recovery isn't a cookie cutter process. What I really wanted to hear about in this issue was people's different experiences working the steps.

The steps can vary between individuals depending on our needs and personalities, and where we are at in our program. The steps can vary even for one individual. I've just made my way through the steps a second time and my experience this time was very different. When I first got clean, I had a

whole raft of really painful and hurtful behaviours that, on the whole, needed to go. I had to shave off a whole 90% of who I was just to become functional. This time around, even though many of the defects were the same, they are more subtle. I was at a very different point in my recovery and was needed to approach these defects in a different way.

The first time through the steps, change was important. The second time, acceptance has become the focus. This reflects the fact that, through working a program, I've changed from someone who was very agitated and actually needed distraction and relief through positive action like service and fellowship to someone who is more content and compassionate with themselves and others.

The journey continues my friends. One thing I'm sure of now is that if you're not moving forward in your recovery, you're moving backwards. The spiritual journey is just that; not a spiritual destination. My life and who I am continues to evolve and what I get out of step-work does with it. I am immensely grateful for NA for giving me the directions and signposts I need to continue to grow into the sort of person who is comfortable without a drug.

**Yours in Ever Loving
Service and Gratitude,**

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.



₹500

**PRE REGISTRATION
COUPONS**

**WE NEED YOUR
SUPPORT**

Registration Chair : Kittu S 98303 02000
KACNA X Chair : Sumit C 79804 41296
kacna10@nakolkata.org

CONTACT

1. This coupon can be redeemed against KACNA X Registration only.
2. Multiple coupons may be redeemed against a one single registration.
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4. In case of any change in ph. no. or email id of the coupon holder kindly notify the registration subcommittee for further communication.
5. This coupon is non-refundable once issued.

Kolkata Area Convention of Narcotics Anonymous

Location : To be Announced | Dates : Nov/Dec 2020

ALL THINGS BEGIN WITH A DREAM

२५५ III

Do you feel like you have something to share as a **SPEAKER** at the 3rd Russian Zonal Forum NA Convention in Kazan 2020?

If your answer is YES

Check if you qualify:

- You work the steps and do service
- You have no less than 5 years of clean time
- You haven't shared previously at Russian Zonal Forum Conventions

Should you fit these criteria, feel free to send us your sharing recording in any audio format (be mindful that file should not exceed 25 Mb) to: conv2020.speakers@yandex.ru

Don't forget to include name, clean time date, city, country, email and contact telephone number. Deadline for recordings admittance is December 31, 2019. Contact Convention Organizing Committee if you have any further questions at:

programa2.ork2020@gmail.com

Visit the convention webpage at:
<https://na-thailand.org/2020-thailand-convention/>



Chiang Mai

Thailand

February 21-23rd, 2020

AS IAN SEE'S IT

Having been solicited to write on how I work the steps I figured if Chopper Read can write a kids book then I'll have a go.

Having watched many people for many years doing stepwork and relapsing anyway I'm not sold on the writing part at all. I've seen groups of blokes sponsored, forming step groups and discussing their feelings at depth then having a shot in the garage, while watching career criminals thrive and enjoy themselves immensely. I've also seen the complete opposite. Is there a uniform code of conduct or is it a choose your own adventure? I prefer to mind my own business and back winners.

As long as people value clean time, enjoy themselves and have a dedicated peer group of like-minded folks with the carrot of serenity and the stick of relapse fixed firmly in their minds, I personally have never seen the need for formalising something that if it isn't in your heart is unlikely to materialise there of its own accord.

The first 3 steps are problem solving tools:

1 identify the problem.

2 bounce it off your peers and sponsor.

3 make a decision based on your conclusions and act on it.

As to the rest of them I'll be sure to update you when I get around to them. I've found this to be the perfect condensed and summarised version of the steps

"Don't make a project out of working your steps. Go through your day being the sort of person you would like to be, trying to help someone else, and making sure you don't hurt anyone. And when you get to the end of your day, review the Twelve Steps and you'll find that you've worked them all."

Ian (5 years clean)

ON THE STEP WORKING GUIDE

I have an issue which I think is important to the future of NA and I would like people to discuss. The problem arises from a contradiction in our literature. For example, the basic text states that, "we know well the two things that make up our disease, obsession and compulsion to use drugs etc..." It goes on to say that *"through abstinence, our disease can be arrested, and recovery is then possible"*.

In the Steps Working Guide (SWG) however, it asks the question "how is your disease operating today?", as well as numerous other examples that imply we are always acting in our disease somehow.

Has the disease been arrested or is it still operating?

I believe this is a clear and simple contradiction, not just in theory but mostly for the newcomers' perception of what it means to have the disease and how to work the steps. I think it leads people to believe that all manner of normal human behaviour is now within the confines of the disease. Perhaps it doesn't seem very important, but I believe these different theoretical approaches lead the newcomer to different understandings of themselves within the program and very different focuses regarding self. The basic text states that *"self-obsession is the core of the disease"* and I was always told that the antidote to our self-obsession was that *"we keep what we have by giving it away"*. We pay it forward so to speak, that by helping others, by passing it on, we stay clean.

I think the SWG adds a couple of unnecessary burdens onto the newcomer which may not pay significant dividends. Firstly, the focus on self during the working of that guide becomes extraordinary. Subsequently, because there is a negative experience from doing this, a serious resistance to the process arises, which in turn has a shaming effect when "step work" is not done. How many times in the last few years have I heard

newcomers severely admonishing themselves for not doing the steps, and saying they hate working them because they are so boring, when in my opinion they are working the steps by not using, being at a meeting, sharing with a sponsor and others, etc. Since the SWG has been published, my experience of working with sponsees has qualitatively changed, particularly the expectations they have of themselves and what it means to work the program. They can turn up with reams of paper filled with detailed analytical notes, chronicles of self. I know what my sponsor would have said: *“What have you done for someone else lately?”*

I think it has created an old-school/new-school division which often leads to miscommunication. I do not know many old timers who like this book unless they are using it piecemeal. Many of the people I have asked definitely think it is either not the most effective way of working the steps, or “not for everyone”, or just simply “a sponsor’s nightmare”. It encourages people into writing endless notes about themselves, expecting sponsors to sit there and listen to it. It is highly repetitive, making many steps into what seem like step 4s. I think newcomers should be told that working the steps is about making actual changes in their character, changing what we say and what we do, not just answering the questions in the green and gold book. “Formal” step work is a new conceptual phenomenon defined by sitting and writing.

I would like to undertake a qualitative research project investigating certain questions regarding people’s use of the SWG to find out whether people are expending effort to overcome it or using it as an effective tool. I think it is an important for the long-term future of NA.

Tim B.

Reprinted (with editing) from NA Today, October 2005.

RESPONSES TO TIM B'S ARTICLE

These are some of the responses I gathered from reposting the article by Tim B on the Internet via the NA Today Blog and on social media sites.

(editor)

I Got clean in 1981 and by the time the steps working came out in 1996 I had already been doing the Steps through other literature, and I was not going to bother with the steps working Guide. But, as others either asked me to sponsor them or asked Questions that were in the steps working, it caused me to get a working Guide, and I am Quite lucky because my home group comes out of the steps working Guide of NA. Just for today what use am I to myself and the newcomer if they don't see me making my walk match my talk, and I don't want to be an Alien in my own fellowship, because everybody is being encourage to read and study the steps working Guide and I alienate myself because I will not. Great is my mate God.

Anonymous

Yep yep yep... I'm in NA for my drug addiction... do I root too much? Maybe... do I spend too much money? Maybe... do I obsess about buying something useless in the future? Maybe... am I in NA to deal with these things... not at all...

Anonymous

Some new members may find this too intense or some may be illiterate. When I came into NA in 1996 they were conducting surveys collecting input to compile the working guide and addicts being obsessive compulsive people certainly added a huge amount of information, opinions and some rehab stuff also which may be overwhelming for some individuals. I prefer to keep it personal but if it works for some that's great. This has been discussed at area level on occasion and we came up with this conclusion. There is a right way and a wrong way to work the steps. The right way is to work them and the wrong way is not to work them.

Kelvin R

Here here! The concept of the 'disease' seems to have migrated to everything in our lives. I'm still of the belief that the disease is the obsession and compulsion to use. It is not my thinking as seems to be the current language in the rooms. A negative thought....oh my disease is active. No, it's just a negative thought

Anonymous

Contradictions? As a bit of an old timer, I ask myself why we say keep it simple and then ask 70 odd questions on the first step in the SWG? Why has recovery now become on par with as thesis?

Anonymous

I found the step working guide sabotaged my growth. Why would I want to grow or improve myself if I've spent weeks going over how shit I am/have been; which is what the questions in the first three steps prompted me to explore? I found that doing the first three steps, the old blue book way, to be encouraging and empowering by comparison. When it comes up to my time, to sponsor fellow addicts in their step work, I will not be encouraging the use of the 12 Step guide text book.

Adelaide S

The suggestion that people might be led to consider "all manner of normal human behaviour [as] now within the confines of" addiction is a reality I have encountered innumerable times during my short while in the fellowship. I hear certain ways-of-being ascribed to addiction and labelled "addict behaviours" constantly. This frustrates me greatly because it simply isn't true.

I agree with the suggestion of issues of resistance, self-centricity, and shame around step-work with the guide. It might be interesting to consider if this phenomenon is in any way contributing to the lack of service engagement among the newer generations of recovery. However, I am still an advocate for the SWG, particularly when implemented by a mind that is not yet able to self-examine and requires structured guidance in order to make progress. I would suggest the deeper issue here might be the (often unconscious) idea there is only one way to do things.

Terri L

RESPONSES CONTINUED

I love how different everyone's experiences here are. We are so lucky to have these different options. I did the first 3 steps 3 times over with the blue book and kept running from myself in one way or another (geographicals/relapse) the step working guide was so repetitive and simple and in your face - exactly what I needed. The journey has been immense so far. Much gratitude

Zoe B

I love this so much!! Have used the guide and found it kept me in the past and very self obsessed. Love love love our blue book, keeps me present, moving forward. Can't wait to take ppl through this way... I believe how initially intended... I honestly have no idea where the guide came from but it should only be used as fire starter #sorrynotsorry #wedorecover

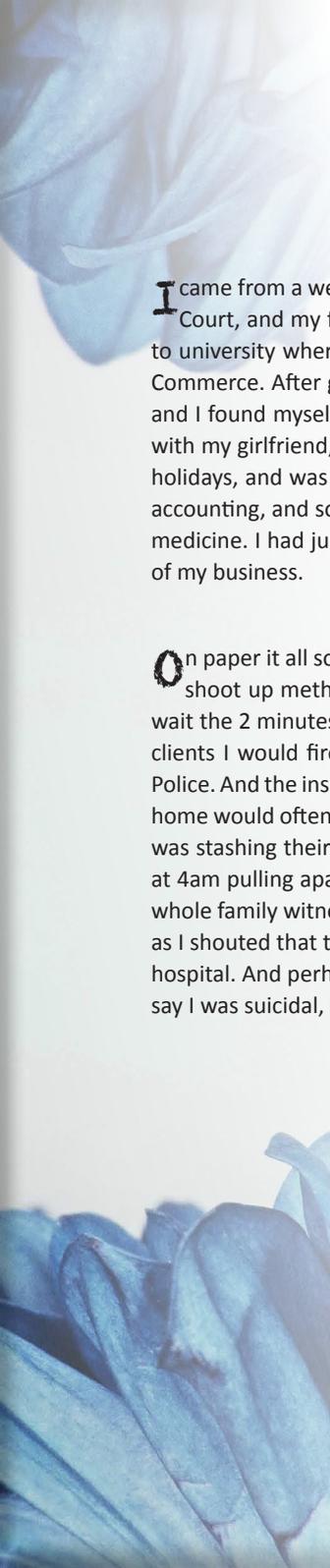
Amanda W

Take what you want and leave the rest behind.... and this process of step work should be done alongside a sponsor! Please... don't get a copy and start doing it by yourself!!! That's not how it works

Ryan B

The SWG was not available when I got clean. At that time the only written steps were 4, 8 and 10. So working the other steps meant I had to read about them, discuss them, go to step meetings, think of how to apply them practically. In 2011 I moved somewhere where members were using the SWG. I was "introduced" to it and started doing written work on Steps 2 and 3 on a few questions selected by my sponsor. I found this very helpful. It required a different commitment, it gave me clarity and a sense of companionship with the literature. I then did all the questions from steps 6 and 7. Sharing with my sponsor was revelatory. Eventually I proceeded to work all steps in written format from the SWG. Yes, the answers are repetitive, yes it is easy to give the "correct" answer and avoid specifics. But overall helpful. I use it with sponsees and select few relevant questions. Also it is great too for informal coffee gatherings with newcomers who might want to understand a bit more. So I find the SWG useful but my deep understanding of the steps has mostly come from attending step meetings, reading them and discussing them.

Danai



John's Article

I came from a wealthy, educated family. My grandfather was a judge of the Supreme Court, and my father ran his own law firm. I attended private school, and went on to university where I obtained two degrees; a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Commerce. After graduating, I setup my own accounting firm. It was a great success, and I found myself with more money than I knew what to do with. I bought a house with my girlfriend, drove a new car, had nice furniture, went on extravagant overseas holidays, and was looking to get married in the coming months. I had grown tired of accounting, and so made a decision to sell the firm and go back to university to study medicine. I had just been accepted into medical school, and was negotiating the sale of my business.

On paper it all sounds pretty damn good. But what I failed to mention is that I would shoot up meth under the desk with my secretary in the room, because I couldn't wait the 2 minutes it would take for her to leave. Nor did I mention the long-standing clients I would fire due to suspicion that they were spies for the Australian Federal Police. And the insanity wasn't just confined to the office. The rare occasions I did come home would often be spent explaining to my distraught girlfriend why "someone else" was stashing their needles under our sink, or why I was wondering the streets naked at 4am pulling apart fridges on the side of the road (listening devices, obviously). My whole family witnessed me overdose at my mum's house, and then watched in horror as I shouted that the paramedics – who had saved my life - had no right to take me to hospital. And perhaps I was shouting because I didn't want my life to be saved. I can't say I was suicidal, but I certainly wanted to be dead.

I remember feeling betrayed by society. I had been sold this idea that with enough external stuff – the house, the girlfriend, the education, the money – I would be happy. But here I was with everything, and all I felt was an excruciating emptiness. I knew that something had to change, and so I sent myself to a 12 step rehab in Thailand. Our rooms were cleaned and restocked with fresh fruit every morning, the smoothie bar was open from 10am – 3pm, and we got massages twice a week. As cushy as it was, I learned from that rehab how crucial

NA meetings were going to be if I wanted a better life. I promised myself I would start going regularly.

I graduated rehab, finalised the sale of my business, and moved from Perth to the Gold Coast to begin my medical degree. As promised I started attending regular meetings. But these addicts weren't like the cashed up foreigners I'd met in Thailand. They had neck tattoos, wore gold chains, and sported the latest TNs they'd purchased with Afterpay. They spoke of homelessness, long jail sentences, and multiple admissions to the psych ward. I watched as people struggled to read the Just For Today out loud, and got teased when using the word "laborious" in one of my shares. People at meetings were sharing how they'd finally found their tribe, but I couldn't have felt more differently.

Despite this sense of separateness, I adhered to the cliché and kept coming back. After all, what other choice did I have? It was clear that NA was my last chance at a good life, and I wasn't about to throw that away just because I felt different. Slowly but surely I started chatting to people after the meetings, went for coffee, got a home group, took on a service position, and even started getting invited to birthday dinners. Granted, if you saw us walking down the street together it would've looked a bit odd. But through developing those relationships I learned a most valuable lesson.

I've never so much as been charged with possession, let alone gone to prison. Although I've been in psychosis, I have no idea what the inside of a psych ward looks like. And while I've been to rehab, it could perhaps be better described as a 5-star resort. I don't have tattoos or wear gold chains, and I can't relate to homelessness, financial insecurity, or illiteracy. But what I can relate to is the dishonesty and manipulation we practiced on a daily basis to stop people from getting in our way. What I can relate to are the soul destroying measures we would take to get our drugs. And what I can relate to is the sense of hopelessness, despair, and excruciating emptiness we would have done anything to alleviate. And I have found that to be more than enough.

It is not where I have been or what I have done that has earned me my seat in NA; I have paid for that privilege with my pain.

NA Police

Do you burn with Righteous Indignation when someone mentions the "Other Fellowship" by name?

Do you get outraged when people give nothing when the basket is passed around?

Are you the first at group conscience meetings to leap to your feet and scream, "**It's Against The Traditions**"?

Are you arrogant, intolerant and judgmental?

Now, You can put these character defects to good use because we have just the job for **you!!!**

During our intensive six week training program our **Qualified Instructors** will teach such topics as:

How to infiltrate NA subversive organizations.

How to conduct 12 Step interrogations.

How to keep group conscience meetings ideologically pure.

How to enforce the 9pm curfew for newcomers.

So don't waste time, join
the **NA Police...NOW!!!!**

By order of the Public Relations Division of the NA Police.

We're just kidding. There is no NA Police.

ONE DAY AT

My Name's Darcy & I'm an Addict!

Picking up @ 13

I was never going to grow!
The places it would take me,
How was I to know?

For 20 years I have been
In & out these rooms!
I didn't want it!
Just replaying the same tunes!

The lengths I would go to
Trying to impress!
It's not the drugs,
But my thinking, I'm Powerless

Full of Ego & Pride
Couldn't hear the suggested
spiritual malady
My life was a mess,
Kept getting arrested!

I couldn't move myself
To the side!
Started getting comfort
From being inside
Then "They" took our baby
due to the lifestyle
I could no longer then
Live in DENIAL

This brought it to the end for me!
It was now clear
It's pure Insanity!

Started hitting meetings
Then got a sponsor
& as is promised
It is me I'm starting to CONQUER

He tells me just
'keep it simple'
don't give up
you're a miracle!

Ears were now open
it's a disease, a spiritual malady

I could I.D. & relate
Hearing humbling similarity!

And NOW I am ready
& the teacher DID appear
it's amazing what's to be heard
when one's ready to hear

He loves me
I know this for sure
I'm Honest, Open & Willing,
even to do Step 4

A t i m e

The War may be won
But the battle goes on
Just got to stay close
Never forgetting where I'm from

Through God's grace
I've been blessed with serenity
Through connection & fellowship
I've been touched with humility!

No longer using substance
Currently free from curses
Got a home group, a sponsor,
Working the steps & doing service!

I'm now 12 months in!
My programs in motion!
I'm no longer homeless,
Got me a unit overlooking the ocean

The challenges I've confronted
In this year alone
I wouldn't be standing here
If I was doing it on my own!

Coming from the place of
NEVER WILL BE TAUGHT!
To now surrendering & accepting
That God, Could & Would if He
were, Sought

I no longer have a story
that centres around dope!
Rather, I bring a Message
of Experience, Strength & Hope

ALL Glory to GOD
& the Joys all mine!
together "WE" can manage my
LIFE
ONE DAY @ A TIME

ALAN'S

It's easy to talk about what drugs did to me. That's where all the drama is, and the funny stories. It's also where the differences between us are. It's much harder to talk about what they did for me, but I've come to learn that's where the deeper identification might be.

What drugs did for me was save my life. I can't pretend to remember how I felt as a child. But I know what I did, because the consequences are still in my face 50 years on. As a young—unmedicated—child I took iron bars to other people and pins and blades to myself. And I was a compulsive thief. Those closest to me bore the brunt. Of my parents, depending on what I choose to remember, there was either plenty of love around, or nasty violent fights. Life's complicated - both are likely true.

Since I had my first half-pint glass of wine, I've never again acted out that catastrophic violence on myself or others. The drug worked. I also learned immediately that if I had two-half pint glasses I'd pass out and get in trouble from mum and dad. It didn't take long to learn that with the gift of the gab, in those days even a child could buy amphetamines and strong opiates from a pharmacy.

That first experience sums up my entire using story; Needing to take as much as I had to, to make life doable, but not so much that I made a fool of myself, couldn't work, prang the car, and so on. I always made a fool of myself, often pranged the car, and my chosen career was finished by the time I was 18. Two thoughts I never remember having

were first, not using, or second, being afraid dying. Despite addiction being like a sack of bricks on my back hampering everything I tried, drugs did in fact work until I was 17 or 18.

It took a further 10 years for the very real fear of stopping to be outweighed by the worsening nightmare of using. Withdrawals were regular and extended life-threatening medical emergencies, and I had no comprehension of not using. Over those years I'd come into contact with members Narcotics Anonymous, both in H&I presentations in institutions, and I'd even been approached in the street and asked if I'd ever been to a meeting. (I'd love to know who that was - young woman, middle of the night, Newtown train station around 1985 is the best I can do.) By the time I was 27 and living at a bus stop drinking meths I was up for it. Through time in rehab I knew one member of NA living in Canberra and being homeless in Sydney I thought I might as well be homeless in Canberra.

That was the turning point. At one day clean the Canberra health services found me a bed in halfway house, and my friend, who later became my first sponsor, took me to meetings. Even paid for a taxi if no there was other option. I'm a great believer in a little luck in early recovery; the first thing I did in my new home was search the cupboards for meths. I was fortunate.

In a sense, my recovery story is the same as my using. The search for something to make life survivable. Abstinence was enough at first. With the friends and fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous putting a life together was a wonderful experience. But the mess between the ears that started me off

ARTICLE

in the first place was still there. Worse, now it was compounded by over a decade of living with levels of shame, fear, pain, and dishonesty that are hard to put into words. To quote a friend, my drug of choice at the end would best have been a general anaesthetic.

The mental turmoil is what the steps are for. NA works for me. (We're not perfect; occasionally we do things to each other as well.) The

difference is that Narcotics Anonymous really works, not a short term triage solution. But I've found no miracle fix. Simply freedom from active addiction; and only when I rigorously work our program.

Over 31 years as member of Narcotics Anonymous I've had two relapses. It seems that any foundation I can build I can dismantle. I've learned that I can unravel the steps backwards, and through trying to manage my own life, end up in enough pain that the only choices I can see are to use again or suicide. That's nuts. Using again after being clean for time was difficult. Trying to remember recovery was like trying to remember a colour that I'd forgotten. Imagine forgetting the colour green,

but knowing it existed. Madness, and I never stopped trying to get back.

The wheat amongst the chaff for me today is that I don't want to be anyone else. I have some degree of acceptance. At four and a half years clean—for the third time—I don't regret relapse. Same as that mad child, it might have saved my life. I still feel shame and guilt at the harm I

perpetrated on those close to me. But I'd rather feel as I do than be the sort of person that can think 'Oh well, that's OK – I was a different person then'. I have some acceptance with my health. I live with an incurable stage four cancer, not active today except for one inaccessible tumour a millimetre or three away from my spinal cord. But it's my health, and I know how to handle it; the same as my addiction. Just for Today I'm OK. (Plus regular scans – I'm sick not stupid). I've been back in my chosen career for a long time now, with a loving wife and mental-case children. I'm surrounded by love – sometimes even when alone. It's not hard to feel some gratitude.

Alan P.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT from NA AT HOME PLATFORM

The NA at Home platform has now migrated from Skype to BlueJeans. This has been done to allow the NA at Home platform to continue to grow thereby ensuring that NA's life saving message can be carried to a larger number of recovering addicts, and addicts that still suffer.

The Skype account: **na_at_home** will be monitored during online meeting times until the end of 2019 and users will be redirected to the new services on the BlueJeans platform.

The **BlueJeans** platform can be accessed on desktop (Mac & PC), on mobiles & tablets (OSX & Android) and through landline numbers throughout Australia.

To download **BlueJeans** use the following link: <https://www.bluejeans.com/downloads#tools>

If you are using a phone then you will need to dial the landline number for your city/state and then enter the conference ID number associated to the meeting that you wish to join.

If you are using an app you simply need to 'Join with ID' using the **Conference ID** associated to the meeting that you wish to join.

NA at Home Platform Landline Numbers

City, State	Landline #
Adelaide, SA	(08) 7070 8060
Brisbane, QLD	(07) 3123 4461
Melbourne, VIC	(03) 8400 4256
Perth, WA	(08) 6365 4437
Sydney, NSW	(02) 8103 4256

NA at Home Platform Meeting Times & Conference ID's – Click on the meeting name for link

Day	Time (SYD)	Meeting Name	Conference ID
Sunday	7pm	Early Bird Meeting	926266442
	9pm	Living Clean Discussion	631374919
Monday	7pm	Living with Long Term Recovery	611333554
	9pm	Just for Today	980923411
Tuesday	7pm	Basic Text Discussion	776967424
	9pm	Just for Today	905578095
Wednesday	7pm	Woman's Meeting	800330959
	9pm	Steps & Traditions Meeting	633699380
Thursday	7pm	It Works How & Why Discussion	573701848
	9pm	Just for Today	501143121
Friday	9pm	Speaker ID / Just for Today	523140721
Saturday	7pm	Ask It Basket	482943120
	9pm	Steps & Traditions Meeting	440409702

The day I gave up made me give in, and because I gave in it made me give it my all.

Finally admitted defeat and it changed me so dramatically, it turned me into someone entirely different. Someone who I thought I could never be. The real me.

It wasn't easy going from comfortably numb to the most uncomfortable pain and vulnerability I'd ever felt. It wasn't easy waking up every day chasing a false sense of comfort from a substance either, so my options of coping were fading fast.

The chase had tired me so badly that I wanted to die ... which led to the only thing left.

The miracle of surrender.

Of course it didn't feel like a miracle and I cringed at my awkward messy self and naturally I wanted to run away and escape.

My mind had convinced me that running was always the solution.

My surrender finally made me accept that running got me nowhere. I was doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result. I was tired of the continuous loop of insane behaviour and was ready to face the ugly reality I'd spent years avoiding.

The only way out was to go within.

To go within was to go out.

Out of my comfort zone and into a room full of strangers and my first NA meeting.

The feeling I got in these rooms is almost too much to explain. It's like the weight of the outside world falling off your shoulders as soon as you walk through that door. It feels like home.

A home filled with people who know your story without judgment and just want to love you back to life.

I found a sponsor who helped me work through the steps to better understand the disease of addiction and to better understand myself. As I worked through the steps and attended meetings regularly I found strength within myself.

One day at a time and sometimes one minute at a time.

One foot in front of the other and sometimes one breath after the other.

Then something amazing happened.

The strength I needed in the beginning to not relapse, became the strength I carried and wanted for my recovery.

I didn't feel uncomfortable in the pain anymore.

I could speak it, think it and feel it. If I found any discomfort I began to embrace it. I started to feel comfortable in my own skin for the very first time.



THE MIRACLE OF SURRENDER

gained something I thought I would never have.

Self worth and love.

Enough love to see that I didn't want to spend my whole life hiding and isolating ... my whole life stuck as a caterpillar.

I was strong enough to break the cocoon and I felt worthy enough to become a butterfly.

A butterfly that had surrendered herself to fall in order to fly.

To experience two lives in one lifetime!

Transformation is madness but what's waiting for you at the end, is magic.

With NA, the love of the fellowship and from living the twelve step program.

Recovery is worth every miracle moment.

Casey E

Anonimity... this is not just the long word at the end of the meeting that people have trouble pronouncing. It's the most important word we have, what's more is.... it's not yours! It's ours!

Let me take you for a walk through my own experience.

this inboxes the NA member like ummmm, sorry I thought u where doing well, they then share how some person gossiped about them in the rooms (or a million other reasons) and the person who just yesterday thought they might give NA a go is put off. They don't want any more drama they just

A n o n i m

Let's start with social media, when a member posts their clean time, picture this fresh face, 30 day tag in hand, 300 likes n comments, thank you NA!.... on their open page. 1 of those 300 people thinks to themselves hmmm I'm having a hard time getting off of drugs this person looks like they are doing well, I might watch for a bit longer and see how this goes. 60 days clean comes along, thank you NA I finally have my life back! This person watch is stoked! Omg there is a way out of this madness....

6 days later the NA member is selling their tv at 1am on marketplace, the person watching

wanna get clean n have a better life. This may go on for months or even years watching this person come good, then fall hard and you know whose fault it is... NA'S FAULT! Our fellowship, as a whole is judged upon 1 person who could have prevented this by simply not sharing this info on a public, worldwide forum.

If that was hard to follow how about this one.... I dunno about you but I could not get a job when I first got clean! I tried everything, even Coles nightshift, service stations, Maccas. No one would employ me. No one. I applied for at least 10 jobs a day without 1 single interview.

Employers now days have access to your social media page long before an interview so if they google me and I have my 90-day clean tag on my page chances are my name got crossed off the list. Whether we like it or not, we are deemed thieves and liars, and no one wants to employ someone who has that kind

Please think before you post. There are many private forums to post on where we can be free of judgment from the outside world, that way if you do fall it's easier to come back coz grandma and your friend from 3rd grade isn't watching your every move.

Y m i l i t y

of thing going on. We are said to be a liability. So if you are like me and need a job, leave out the fellowship stuff off of your social media forum coz if u do manage to get the job and the till is down \$20 u know who will get the blame... the new guy who posted about his na tag last week on insta.

There is a piece of literature written to guide us through this stuff. We are all learning so if you are worried take 12 mins out of your day and read the social media pamphlet, you can find it online and at most na meetings

You see the anonymity is not yours, its ours. When you wave it around it effects our group as a whole. The outside world gets to judge us, as a whole and it blocks newcomers from coming and having their own true experience.



Depression in Recovery

I have been depressed in my life a few times. A couple of times a little bit and a couple of times a lot. I spent most of the last year deeply depressed, triggered by adverse life circumstances and I am just now coming out of it.

In that time, I read a lot about depression. I read a lot about depression medication and, overall, I thought a lot about why I was unmotivated and jaded and what life is all about.

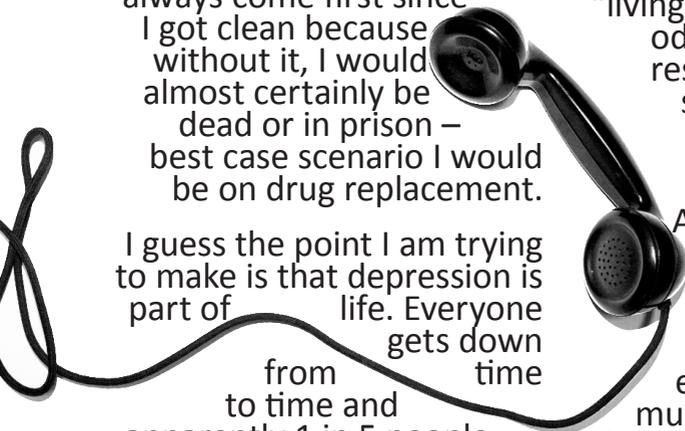
My commitment to NA has always come first since I got clean because without it, I would almost certainly be dead or in prison – best case scenario I would be on drug replacement.

I guess the point I am trying to make is that depression is part of life. Everyone gets down from time to time and apparently 1 in 5 people suffer a severe depression during their life. I happen to be one of those 1 in 5.

Perhaps what I am about to say is controversial, but I don't mean it to be. They are all just choices I made that I have to live with, and I suppose my experiences are as valid as anyone else's.

I took no medication – I wanted a medication free solution for myself. During my last year I learned about myself and my spiritual journey. I learned about the power of my expectations and how painful it can be when they are not met. I found the only place that gave me any reprieve was “living in the moment”. The odd meeting was a nice respite as well but even some of them I found myself grinding out rather than enjoying.

As a good little addict, I also tried hard to be “not depressed”. To stay positive I watched a TED talk everyday. I listened to music and watched films that I thought might inspire me even though I didn't feel like it and all these things were ideas I gleaned from the program about making positive choices and not



succumbing to self pity or
being morose.

I was severely depressed
one other time when I was
young and using drugs. I
went to hell at that time.

I was in so much pain
that none of the drugs
anaesthetised it. I starved
myself almost to death and
overdosed on drugs as often
as I could. I went to the far
reaches of the dark side and
only returned when I got
clean in NA and was taught
to live a better way.

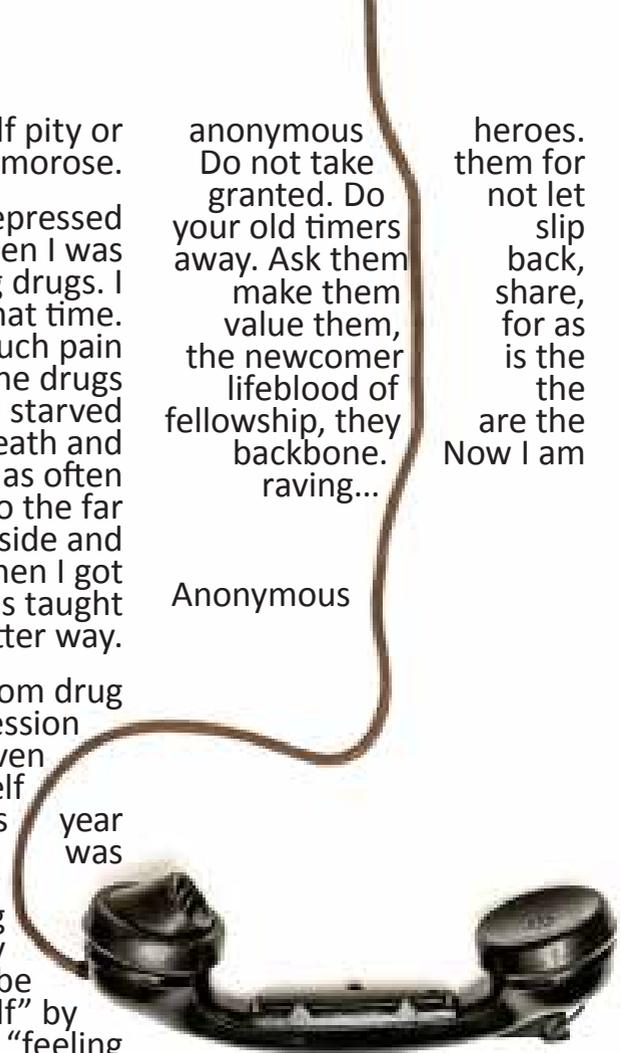
Recovering from drug
addiction and depression
in NA has given
me a level of self
-mastery. This
being depressed
made a lot easier
by deeply knowing
"it will pass" by
deeply knowing "be
kind to yourself" by
deeply knowing "feeling
bad is OK, don't resist it".
All the wisdom given to me
over the years through the
rooms cradled me through
those dark months and now
you would never even know
I had such a crap year. I am
happy again. Thank GOD
for the program and thank
GOD for the people who
make it work by turning
up week in week out, year
in year out. They are our

anonymous
Do not take
granted. Do
your old timers
away. Ask them
make them
value them,
the newcomer
lifeblood of
fellowship, they
backbone.
raving...

heroes.
them for
not let
slip
back,
share,
for as
is the
the
are the
Now I am

Anonymous

year
was



SOUTHERN MORNINGTON

PENINSULA

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (N.A): 1991 to 2019

The Beginning (December 1991)

Greg M had been attending meetings at another 12-step fellowship for years, and in 1991 at one month clean he decides to open an N.A meeting in Rosebud on the Southern Peninsula. Greg M reports getting support from other recovering addicts including Tai T from Frankston. The number of recovering addicts attending the meeting increases, and this meeting eventually goes on to become the Rye meeting. In 2005 with low numbers attending the meeting in Rye, and the same people doing service, the meeting is closed and there is no longer N.A meetings on the Southern Peninsula.

The Reforming (June 2009)

Two recovering addicts Steve B and Steve K (RIP) become friends through attending Southern Peninsula meetings of another fellowship and start a new N.A meeting in Rosebud. Steve B and Steve K invite other local recovering addicts from the area including old timers Jim M and Tony A. Jim M still had all the original N.A banners and attendance records from the old Rye meeting and donates these to the new meeting.

Today (August 2019)

The fellowship has grown and is going strong, there are currently six meetings a week on the Southern Peninsula, and thirteen in total for Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. The Southern Peninsula meetings Dromana, Rosebud and Mornington are all connected through the GSF (Group Support Forum).

Thanks to the following people who contributed : Greg M (Dromana Tuesday lunch time) Steve B (Rosebud Thursday night) Rachael W (Rosebud Saturday morning) Tony A (Rosebud Thursday night) Tai T (Hastings Wednesday night). I apologise if we have not including anyone or any part of the story, all efforts were made to get our local history accurate.

YIS Rob W (Rosebud Saturday morning)

Having never done prison time, together with an unremarkable using story, I felt totally unqualified to share about recovery inside prisons, but I had the time and willingness to be of service.

What swiftly became evident is that it isn't about me, my ineligibility, lack of prison experience/hard-man act or tats. In fact I'm probably the least likely person to click with inmates - a retired bloody schoolteacher!

Prison visits demonstrate that just for today someone in NA cares about the lives of men behind the walls - who cannot attend meetings, I'm there to listen, encourage and share the NA message of recovery, strength and hope. Admittedly there's constant prayer not to fall into schoolteacher mode, but just as our fellowship as a whole is incredibly diverse, we can all

shares. One comment that meant a lot to me when I finished up at Long Bay was "I really liked that you don't act tough, don't swear that much and you make the effort to get here (from Katoomba)-thanks!"

Meetings open with a reminder of the 3rd and 12th Traditions. Members warm up with a reading card before they share on the ravages of addiction and how they're going today. I read something from our literature and do the same. We close with the Serenity prayer. Invariably, the men are respectful, attentive and keen to show themselves and their families that they're attempting to seek a new way of life without drugs. Unless NA members run meetings inside prisons, the men generally have no access to NA online /12 Step recovery per se. Sadly, there are

H & I - IT'S AN INSIDE JOB

relate due to our common nemesis; the disease of addiction.

Friendship and mutual respect take time to develop, so having a regular gig is important. We look forward to seeing each other. Stories I've shared about my own troubles (demonstrating that life doesn't magically cease to knock us sideways, just because we're clean) have elicited guys asking after my family members with genuine concern and the sharing of their common experiences. The more I get to know the men and recall their personal circumstances and struggles, the deeper and more meaningful our

few NA members involved in H&I in Western Sydney/Blue Mountains, such that only Parklea has weekly meetings. Other prisons either meet once a fortnight (John Morony/Oberon), or not at all (Lithgow).

For the past two years, I've been visiting prisons and for a time Villawood Detention Centre with members from another fellowship. Derek D is known to anyone who looks into H&I service within NA. Liaising with Corrective Services NSW to authorise NA members to visit NSW prisons. Derek's passion for H&I is infectious (H&I meetings have been running continuously

since 1983 - 36 years). I started by doing Fridays at Long Bay, then through the support of H&I committee, staff at the prisons and other NA members, meetings have either re-opened (Parklea & John Morony) or started (Oberon) here in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Special Programs Officers within the prisons are really keen, helpful and dedicated.

My using began in punk-era London, having struggled through an unemployment degree at uni in Brisbane followed by a clerical job at the height of the '70's wages boom. Cashed up, utterly lost and depressed, within a fortnight of puffing a joint for the first time I launched into heroin and 12 years of addiction followed. Pub-bands, drugs, motorcycles - over the next four years I worked the colder months in the UK & travelled for 3-6 months at a time around Europe, generally sleeping rough. I took drugs before I knew their effects. 'LSD is like smoking dope, but a bit stronger' I was told - my first acid trip came on riding behind another motorcycle tooling down a steep hill with a sharp round-about at the bottom - I swear there was a massive, fire-belching dragon involved.

Geographicals, crime (theft, fraud, drug-dealing) and lies, endless lies. Each of us has our own story with its drug-crazed antics, isolation, degradation and self-obsession. We're all qualified to talk about addiction and more importantly,

INTERESTED IN H&I?

how to get clean and stay clean. For me that started with attending my first meeting with a belly-full of fear, hating everyone in the room. However, twenty-eight years later I'm still here, so I must be doing something right. For me that started with washing the cups and getting a sponsor who quickly got me involved in Area service. Fellowship and the 12 Steps have done the rest. You don't need bulk time to do H&I service. One commitment a month can make an enormous difference to your fellow H&I peers and NA members on the inside.

The only requirements for NA members to visit NSW prisons are:

- A suggested 5-year gap since your last conviction for your Criminal Record Check.
- Completing an application form and signing a standard conduct agreement.
- Passing an online Security Awareness course, to be completed in your own time.
- Flexibility & commitment to visit during H&I visiting times, which may include weekends. For more details contact;

Derek D 0409 363 975,

Lara 0415 958 387

or Paul M 0447 603 835.

(all numbers reprinted with permission).

The Way We Work the Steps

This is a great theme because the ways we work the steps are as diverse as our membership. What works for some people doesn't work for other people, but the beautiful promise of this program is that if you work the third step thoroughly, honestly and constantly,

YOU CANNOT FAIL TO RECOVER.

Think about that for a moment. Recovery for me has always been more than just giving up drugs. Drugs was the symptom of a much larger and more pervasive problem, so recovery has to be deeper and take place across more aspects of my entire life and who I am, than just merely giving up a substance. Which is not to say that giving up a substance is a 'mere' act, there's nothing 'mere' about it, it's just really only the first step.

The fact that I barely know myself means that I cannot heal myself. Even now, after significant time up, I still harbour a ball of defects that I am only now starting to see the destructive effects of in my day to day life. Sometimes I don't even know I'm acting out in them. Without healing from these defects, I will surely use again. If not drugs, then some other pattern of behaviour will, can and has brought me to my knees. After all, before I had the spiritual program contained in the steps, all I

had to go on were my defects, and my only escape from these was to use, so no wonder my life was in the shitter. Drugs just made it easier to be 'defective' because I couldn't hear the voice of my conscience anymore. I knew it was wrong to be selfish, but I couldn't feel it, so I didn't care. Defects were actually the problem.

My defects put me in direct opposition to my Higher Power. I'm fairly sure that it's not God's will for me to act selfishly, so by practicing the third step, I can hopefully avoid that. My Higher Power wants the highest good for all, which actually includes me, and being now God's servant as it were, having surrendered my will and my life to God's care, I have a responsibility to act as God calls me to act.

The problem is that defects feel so comfortable, so usual and normal, that it's STILL hard to see when I'm even acting on them. That's where step 10 swoops in to help. Step 10 is a daily maintenance thing. Because we aren't perfect, and will never be, but we can tap into the source of perfection to get by, better.

The way I practice step 10 is like this: I have an upset feeling. I stop and ask myself, 'Where am I being selfish, resentful, dishonest, fearful in this situation?' Because some iteration of those defects are contributing to or creating my disturbed state. The original 12 step text then suggests

I discuss this with another person at once, pray to have the defect removed, make amends if I need to and then resolutely turn my attention to someone I can help.

This is an entirely practicable solution, given to me by a sponsor who was hard arsed about it. I had no willingness to do it and fired him a number of times about it, but then realised the depth of the inward freedom I was experiencing was like nothing I'd ever experienced before. I was so attached to my defective personality that I was horrified that I'd have to give up tall stories or that I'd have to go out of my way to help someone. But as a tangible result of trusting someone else and trusting the steps, and actually working them, my life changed yet again, and now I'm horrified that such a cheap trade seemed like the easier softer way. I was willing to let my defects stand in the way of a constant comforting connection with the God of my understanding. Not so much now.

Everything that addiction promises is flimsy, it's just the allure that looks so attractive. 'Hey, this shitty behaviour is the easier softer way, trust me' actually means 'Hey, I want you in pain and cut off from the source so I can destroy you with drugs/food/relationships/sex/gambling/material possessions/success/substance of your choice.' Step one, our powerlessness over substances, gives us back our choice in how we want to live, because it's no longer a choice of what drug to make me and only me better, but now what action can I take for the highest good of all, including me. Feels good to be a part of, not apart from.

Tess S



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

