

NA TODAY

Free Publication

Of The Australian Region

Service On All Levels

March 2020





We have had many inquiries and questions about health concerns regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19). We have been asked to address some of the issues and provide support for groups and Areas.

As a fellowship we have no opinion on outside issues, and it is not our role to make statements regarding health issues. We encourage NA groups to discuss the situations you are facing and the options you have to provide safe environments for those who attend your meetings. This statement has been prepared taking into account feedback from our members, and the collective experience of NA as a whole and what we have learned from how other NA service bodies are responding to the issue.

Groups may want to consider and make format changes in regard to;

- Avoiding hugs and handshakes
- Refraining from holding hands and embracing to close a meeting
- Providing meetings with hand sanitiser, extra soap, wipes etc
- Consider not offering refreshments

These are just a few thoughts; we honour each NA group's responsibility to discuss and determine what is best for their meeting.

We have become aware that some groups are already facing issues with venues they host meetings at closing temporarily. Each group should consider their options around where and how meetings can be held and what plans they have to contact members to advise of such closures, especially at late notice.

The Australian Regional IT committee has advised of the following protocol to notify of temporary closure of meeting.

If you are part of a home group which is under a temporary closure due to the situation at hand please submit a meeting change request advising of such closures and we will update the meetings list accordingly and mark the meeting as "Temporarily Closed". When the meeting is ready to reopen reply to the original notification you received and we will update the status. <https://www.na.org.au/multi/meeting-update-form/>

Large events like conventions, unity days and retreats may also be affected by measures put in place by venues, and committees may want to consider undertaking a risk assessment in deciding whether to continue, reschedule or cancel events. If you are considering attending an event please contact the service committee responsible for hosting that event or meeting or visit na.org.au as the best resource for current information for local events and meetings.

Service Bodies who conduct services under the PR banner (H&I presentations and/or PI presentations) may want to consider conducting risk assessments in deciding whether to continue providing services or suspending. Care should be taken to adhere to any restrictions provided by the facilities. We recommend that service co-ordinators maintain regular contact with facilities and with volunteers and be mindful of maintaining good relationships with current facilities or potential PR opportunities.

You may want to contact your national or local public health agencies for specific guidance regarding meetings and gatherings. We are aware of the guidelines and recommendations provided by the Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>. The World Health Organization (WHO) may also be a resource <https://www.who.int/>

Regardless of group decisions each individual is responsible for their own health decisions. Recovery support can come in many forms not just in person meetings. In times like this use of the telephone and technology can help us feel connected. Information regarding Australian online meetings can be found here <https://www.na.org.au/multi/online-meetings/> and international online meetings can be found here <https://virtual-na.org/>

We are hopeful that NA members and groups can continue to provide support for one another as we move through this current situation, and we will update this information as necessary in the coming weeks. You have our best wishes.

To see the response from NA World Services click here https://www.na.org/admin/include/spaw2/uploads/pdf/Coronavirus_web_message_12Mar.pdf

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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,

I like to tell people, if you're not doing service, you're missing out!

Service has always been a huge part of my recovery and it has given me some of the best opportunities for growth and healing.

Some of the most long-lasting relationships and valuable friendship I've made have been through service commitments. I get a sense of belonging, connectedness, and mutual love from being in service environments with other addicts. I've also had the opportunity to spread the message to the addict who still suffers directly by H&I presentations in detoxes and jails and in more indirect methods (like editing this mag!). This has solidified my recovery.

I feel as if agreeing to take on a service position is like making the commitment to not pick up or come to meetings — it's not negotiable. One thing service has given me is experience of making a commitment and following through on it. Finishing my first term as secretary for the lunchtime meetings in Perth was pretty much the first thing I've seen to the end. We work an awful lot of the steps at once when we do service. And part of my new way of life is being someone who is reliable and does what they say, even if they don't want to. So, taking on service positions has been something I've always put a lot of thought into.

My disease centres around self-centredness. When I'm being of service, I'm letting go of the selfishness and self-obsession that sits right at the core of my disease. I've found that one of the best solutions when I am running rough is to call someone else who is struggling and listen to them for a while, or

clean the cups after a meeting, or reach out to a newcomer.

But I've also gotten to develop many of the virtues that make up my new spiritual landscape. Some of these are humility, tolerance, and patience. I often find myself getting frustrated in service environments, but it's important to make sure other people get to be heard, and I often have to let go of what I thought was the right course of action to take and acquiesce to the will of God as manifest through the service body in question. I'm not God, and I have to admit that I might not know what's best, despite how convinced I am of my position. But I've also had to learn to have enough courage to speak my voice in an appropriate way.

Service has also taught me that one of the most important things is to help others to get involved. Being of service has taught me to be compassionate enough to give people the space to have a go, feel a part of, and be included. I've also made a lot of mistakes in service, so out of that I've learnt to be more compassionate of the mistakes of others. Life is hard and messy sometimes, and we're all just doing our best, and sometimes it's best just to relax, have a laugh, and go with the flow.

This issue is dedicated to service at all levels. I hope you enjoy reading it and thanks those who took the time to write.

Like I said, if you don't have a service position, you might be missing out on one of the greatest gifts recovery has to offer.

**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.



NO MATTER WHAT
Adriatic region - 14th Summer convention

12 - 14 JUNE 2020
TROGIR, CROATIA

HOTEL MEDENA
SERENITY | LOVE | FREEDOM

f INFO: Trogir 2020 - 14th regional summer convention

IRCNA - X (2020)

Welcome To IRCNA - X 2020
JODHPUR

Dear Members If You Are Coming To Convention By Rail Transport , Aeroplane Or By Bus & Need Any Type Of Assistance To Reach At Convention Site , Our Volunteers Are Eager To Help You To Get You From Your Destination's To Convention Site.

Please Call For Assistance
Aman P. (Hospitality Chair) +91 98727 57164
Amritpal S. (Welcome Chair) +919877376355

DIVERSITY
IS OUR STRENGTH
LCNA 28

FRIDAY 17TH TO SUNDAY 19TH APRIL 2020
CONVENTION TICKETS 2020 AVAILABLE NOW @ WWW.LCNA2020.ORG

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| WEEKEND ADVANCE TICKETS: £20 | CRICHE |
| ON THE DAY: FRIDAY £10 | FOOD & REFRESHMENTS |
| SATURDAY & SUNDAY £15 | MERCHANDISE & LITERATURE |
| WEEKEND £25 | MULTIPLE SPEAKERS |
| | CLEANTIME COUNTDOWN |

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, 173, EUSTON RD, LONDON, NW1 2AX UNITED KINGDOM
londonconventionna@gmail.com www.lcna2020.org

H&I Story of Hope

Service, where do I begin?

Maybe I begin at home, or my last home, which was a dark and lonely place, one of isolation, one of addiction and disconnection. I sat in the room of a detox, waiting to listen to 2 visitors that came to speak about their experience, strength and hope.

I was desperate, afraid and extremely tired, so I decided to listen with an open mind.

It was hard to fathom that these 2 speakers were addicts, they seemed happy, they seemed comfortable in their own skin. I was intrigued, and sceptical.

As I sat there on the bones of my despair, I heard my story, it wasn't the same, but it had the same patterns of desperation, denial, struggle and self destruction.

I had been to detox after detox, I thought that was the answer? Could I have been missing something?

I heard the experience, I heard the strength, I FELT the hope.

I walked out of that room, and I didn't know it yet, but the seed had been planted.

I was to relapse and go through more despair and heart-ache, but when I reached my first spiritual awakening, the one of complete admission of powerlessness and surrender. That seed that had been planted in that H&I, started to peer through.

I started my journey, and applied service by showing up and letting go.

Today, I see service in every opportunity, which I have been taught by the spiritual principles of this program. My levels of service started off with buying tea for a meeting, reaching out to people in the fellowship, and giving back to detox's with my own story. And today, my level of service has transcended into my daily life.

By serving those I encounter with that of open-mindedness, mutual respect and compassion, whether that be telling someone I understand their pain, that I am listening, that I am present or whether that be showing a random act of kindness without any expectations.

The fellowship has restored my faith in a level of service free from the ego, and for that I am forever grateful.

Dedicated to my sponsor C.W.

A SERVICE JOURNEY

I am 31 years clean.

When I was 90 days clean a loving old timer called Gail H approached me and said "OK, now it's time to do some work". I was like "whaaa"?

"Service" she said, "you know, doing your bit for the fellowship, maybe you could be the secretary of this meeting?"

I was happy enough to give it a go, but I had no idea where that small conversation would lead me in the long term, to a whole raft of experiences and to the centre of NA.

My new sponsor agreed with her sentiment, said it was all about service and contributing to others, so I began as a secretary.

Sometime later I became a GSR which was the first time I had ever served on a committee about anything.

Over the years I have done all the group positions many times over. I have served at three different area service committees in many different roles as I have lived in three different cities.

I have worked on and chaired conventions and I have sponsored a few people along the way too.

In the service structure, I found myself gravitating to the chair position mostly, I think because I didn't really have much of an opinion about anything. I'm not sure if that was sociopathy or sage acceptance. But I clearly wasn't married to specific outcomes like others seemed to be.

I have ended up chairing many different committees at many levels of service and I have also moved over into the broader non-NA community where I sometimes sit on boards and committees there too from time to time.

It's weird because inside I still feel like a little junkie kid, but others seem to take me and my opinion seriously.

My original sponsor told me that I should never be without an NA job no matter how small. When my son was born, I went from chairing the region to being a treasurer at my home group, as my family needs became a priority, but I have never lapsed in my ongoing service.

As my son got older I was roped back into a committee job and at the moment I am chairing the FSO which is nice because I get to connect with a bunch of really experienced, committed and clever NA members.

Sometimes we argue because we are supposed to, but we seem to have learned the lesson from tradition one – to disagree without being disagreeable. I always go in nervous and come out happy and connected.

It always inspires me at the end of big service events when I look around and think about the level of effort and contribution people have made. It often appears to be the same core group who do a lot of the work – I believe they are the lucky ones.

Anonymous

A HUMBLE SERVANT

I used to believe service was about being completely selfless.

Through doing service through NA I've learnt there's no service without taking care of yourself.

I used to always agree to anything that was asked of me and carried that into my recovery this time.

I thought if I could physically do it then I should no matter the detriment to myself.

I would've relapsed if I wasn't forced to slow down at 5 months clean. I slowed down and recommitted to recovery.

Service through joining a home group and taking a service position helped me open up to the fellowship and understand that connection is needed for me to stay clean.

I had a weekly secretary position with others relying on me to turn up and be accountable. It wasn't too much, but it was enough that I felt useful. I could do once a week and I'll be forever grateful for the gift that service gave me.

Every week it was like committing to recovery when I'd turn up and do it. I also got to know others and they got to know a bit more about me. It always comes back to connection for me.

I had to give up my service position 6 months ago, but I still do service by helping set up and put away my home groups meetings. I also help out with other groups.

I also recently was asked to help with a 12 step call out to a hospital to see an addict just coming to terms with her addiction. Then there's this small bit of writing I've been asked to do. It's all service that has helped me to be a part of our wonderful fellowship.

I need service to stay clean just as NA needs us all to do service so that we continue to have Narcotics Anonymous.

In active addiction I didn't care about anyone else let alone be of service to them. Now that I'm in recovery I want to and can help by giving of my time and support.

I didn't ever imagine I'd love it so much and selfishly get so much from it. So, if your new to the program or just don't do service please put your hand up. You'll save not only your own life, but those of your fellow addicts.

Lucy, North Perth Lunchies, WA

Previous ARSC treasurer shares

I have been asked to write something about my experience as Regional Treasurer so here goes!

When I first got clean, I was told to get involved in service, not to be a boundary rider but to throw myself into the middle of NA. This was one of the suggestions that I took on and it has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my recovery.

It has helped me in so many ways from feeling that warm glow inside when you've carried the message to someone and it's made a difference, to being able to stand up for myself in service meetings and to actually be heard.

Growing up I was never listened to and I was always told I was only a girl and what did I know. Being a part of service has given me a voice, it has healed that broken girl and it has given me a level of compassion for the still suffering addict that renews my gratitude on a daily basis.

I got clean in London and was the Alternate Regional Delegate at just 2 years clean.

I was suddenly propelled into a level of service that was scary and intimidating! I went to the World Service Conference and was blown away at all these people who

seemed to have it together and knew about the traditions and had so much clean time. It inspired me to keep doing service.

I fell in love with an Aussie at the Conference and ended up moving to Sydney – and that's a whole other article!

The person I fell in love with was elected as a Trustee of NA at that Conference and so when I came here to Australia, I continued my involvement with service.

I became part of regional service and had various positions for a few years. I had a child in that time and as life became busy, I stopped doing regional service but continued doing other forms of service.

I have only ever been a member of one NA group in Sydney (Balmain Sunday Night) and have been a group member there for over 30 years now! I was a regular at Mulawa doing H&I also.

Some 5 odd years ago the regional service committee of NA found itself in trouble due to the misappropriation of funds by the then treasurer. It caused a lot of controversy and finger pointing and I was asked if I would like to come back to region as the treasurer as I had the skill base for the position.

her experience with service

I went along to the meeting and put my hand up to serve the fellowship once more.

I was elected as the assistant treasurer and so began a four-year term of being assistant treasurer and then treasurer.

NA at that time was in crisis. A lot of money had been misappropriated, some people wanted justice, and others wanted to move forward in a responsible and loving manner.

It caused a lot of friction between the committee members, some of whom had served with the previous treasurer, some who held resentments and made threats and complaints.

A lot of time was put into trying to restore faith into the fellowship of NA again, committees were formed to deal with all the issues we were facing. People resigned and friendships were lost forever.

I hadn't served at region for many years and it was a struggle to try and understand what had happened and remain impartial.

I knew that there was a job to be done and so systems were put in place to ensure that monies could never be misappropriated again.

Cheque books were dispensed with, electronic banking was established and 2 people always having to sign all payments and transfers.

No cash exchanged hands at all and everything had to be co-signed by the assistant treasurer.

The committee voted for an independent book keeper to also do the monthly accounts and an annual audit commenced by an independent accounting firm which still continues today.

A report is submitted to the committee each year verifying the books and all the transactions.

I have now completed my term as Treasurer and I feel confident that all the systems that have been put in place will ensure the financial viability of NA moving forward.

I'm proud of my achievements and I'm proud of the committee I served with, and that we came through a very difficult time in Australian Regional Service history.

(Continued page 21)

The Caterpillar &

I used to be a caterpillar. I'd crawl from leaf to leaf. It was all boring, flat, and one dimensional. Sometimes I'd find a particularly tasty leaf and be excited for a short while. Often I would meet other caterpillars and we would talk for ages about how good these leaves were and how some could make us feel like there was another dimension beyond the flatness of leaves. Then we'd get the munchies and keep chewing away at our leaf of choice. We didn't even notice or care about the other caterpillars most of the time. In between special leaves, we forgot that there was even the possibility of a 3rd dimension beyond the flat of flat leaves.

Then I stumbled across a bunch of caterpillars who were changing. They were wrapping themselves in a silky cocoon. They separated themselves from the flat-munchers. They seemed to be trying to become something else. I didn't really get what they were trying to do. But I did know that I felt more accepted, more understood, and safer inside this cocoon than I had ever felt before in my life.

At first I thought that I really really got it. I was in! I was changing!

Then somehow, I drifted away from the cocoon. As I drifted away, quite quickly, my life became so flat that I wanted to fall off my leaf and become lost forever. But thankfully there was still a thin thread of silk connecting me to the cocoon. I pulled on that silk until it brought me back in to the changers.

Again, I thought I've got this now! But some older, wiser folk told me that I had not gotten it yet. I needed to pray for THE GIFT OF DESPERATION. So I prayed and I prayed. My world sometimes became less flat for a while, but nothing so meaningful. I was told that desperation is a GIFT. You cannot work for it, you cannot buy it, you can't steal it... It's a gift!

Then one day it was given to me. It was like a thunderbolt to the antenas. It sent the biggest shock through my head and my slinky body. The one who gave me the gift said...

The Gift of Desperation

"You are a walking YET. You see those folks over there, they lost everything. They tried to bend the world to make it less flat. They went out on the furthest branch looking for a wonkier view. They almost lost themselves. Many of us have become lost that way. All of that will happen to you. It just hasn't happened YET.... But stay with us, do the work, and you can avoid THE YETS. Just remember to never become FORYETFUL, that is the FIRST STEP.

That threw my whole world into mayhem. All these questions came into my head:

- Who am I without flatness?
- Has this ever really been done before?
- Even if others have done it, does that mean I could too?
- What the heck is the 3rd dimension anyway? Can we really live there?

Then I shook, my whole world wobbled. I realised that I was more afraid of the YETS than anything else. I was beaten, I was desperat and I SURRENDERED.

Overnight, without my knowing it, a cocoon formed around me. I was melted and re-formed into something new. When I woke up, the whole world seemed somehow different. I was different. I had been transformed. I was given wings. My wings have not opened yet. I do not know if I will be a beautiful butterfly, an average butterfly or even a drab moth. But I do know that if I keep working hard I will eventually be able to spread my wings and fly into the 3rd dimension.

I have heard about a HIGHER POWER that can lift you. Maybe it is just air in a different form, I think they call it wind. Or maybe it is something that I just can't grasp yet. But I have heard that if you don't fight against it, then it will lift you over and away from many of the YETS. Apparently, we can even invite other caterpillars to find their wings too. We just got to stay close to the cocoon group and do some work.

Bo G.

YOU KEEP ME ALIVE

I got clean in a rehab and lived there for nearly 11 months. I did a meeting every night and also did in house meetings when I could and also did up to 3 meetings a day on weekends.

I did a meeting a day for over 7 years. At about 5 years I moved and lived in a country town and in Brisbane, driving backwards and forwards for about 18 months.

I still did a meeting a day and rarely went for more than a few days if life commitments got in the way.

I worked and was a part time uni student for 4 years.

It wasn't all that long ago now and I look back and wonder how I did it.

I have a very strong Faith, in fact I think that is all I have got.

It is really strong and that God of ours put me in NA and I'll damned if I am not going to take this bull by the horns and give it my best crack.

I feel like at the moment I am more frightened and teary than ever and I wonder how I am going to carry on, more often than not.

Then I stop, do a meeting and just settle within myself because the meetings take away the selfishness that I think that I am badly done by, or that my life is not all lining up at the moment and it helps with the restlessness.

I always hear stuff that makes me grateful and excited again about the future, or tomorrow, or my home, or my yard, or my new puppy, or how my dogs play together, as I have two to care for now, or how amazing it is that I got to speak to my youngest son, who is in Bali and who faceted me, and I could talk to him and his Balinese friend who Daniel had known for 5 years. They both wanted to know about my German Shepard pup and how it is caring for her.

Later I took some great videos of her and Stumps and my garden that I am still clearing as I haven't been in this house for over 5 years. I could send them over as I know they will be interested.

Daniel actually has a mother he is interested in. How f*cking astounding is that.

I got to talk about the dove that nested in the big vine tree that leans over my verandah and how she raised 2 eggs in this drought and how one afternoon I was sitting under the tree on the blue recliner when one of the chicks fell out of the tree, nearly fully grown and it twitched and died.

The drought just keeps on keeping on. I grabbed it and couldn't find the squirty bottle of water I use to cool the dogs down with and ran into the sink, in a feeble attempt to sprinkle water on it as if that might bring it back to life.

I am continually teary at the moment and that scares me a bit. I am embarrassed at being such an emotional being. I don't know what I am really like at times, because for 25 years I didn't feel and the next 5 years were early recovery and still finding myself and dealing with feeling at all, and mostly not knowing which feeling is which. Although I must say, I think they were mostly fear or anger and then I thought I was in love. As if I'd know. I didn't know much ... and I still don't know much.

Now who would have thought that would be a wondrous place to be.

I feel like now I can start to learn a little about life and myself and how I fit into that.

I heard tonight at the meeting that the longer we are here the more we need meetings and I feel that definitely.

I still have that hunger to learn, the hunger to not give up and the hunger to keep evolving.

That is a gift from God as I didn't get that on my own.

So many gifts.

The gift of hearing the message.

The gift of fighting through early recovery to make one day at a time.

The gift of knowing at some level, that because I was so sick, my life depended on it.

Now the gift is that I can repeat it when needed.

The gift of crying, as I am now when I can't tell if I'm upset or just plain happy to be alive and grateful to still be in the race, and that's because of all the other gifts written above.

F*cking hell who can understand the mind, heart and soul of an addict ... ?!?

You know what, we all can because that's what happens every time I hear one of you share.

Thanks God. Why? Because He gave you all to me. Now that's a big gift. So see you at the next meeting. You keep me alive.

Gwenneth

WHAT THEY SAY...

Just like everyone else, in NA sometimes what we say isn't exactly what we mean

What they say

And I'll just end on this...

It is now time for the 7th tradition

I've had a really rough time lately

I was around when NA got started

You don't have to like everyone in the rooms

I am finding it hard to concentrate in meetings lately

NA is not for everyone

I am thinking about cutting down on meetings

I don't always call my sponsor as often as I should

My disease is very active at the moment

A hand cleaning up would be appreciated

When I first got clean, I did a lot of service

I got clean on the end of a tea-towel

I stayed out of relationships for a few years

I haven't always done all the suggested things, but I've never picked up

...WHAT THEY MEAN

What they mean

Prepare to go into resentment time

Time for smokes. Everyone please exit as noisily as possible

I WANT TO USE DRUGS!!!

You guys have got it easy

I don't like anyone in the rooms

You are all very boring to listen to

Being clean is not for me

I am preparing my relapse well ahead of time

I am tired of having people call me on my bad behaviour

I am spending so much money on hookers at the moment

You bastards never do nothin'!

Until I got a life, now I don't do any

I was incapable of interacting with other people in early recovery

No one would sleep with me for many years

I have slept with a lot of newcomers and they did

Virtual NA

NA Meetings Online & by Phone



In this difficult time, the best place to find online meetings is via the website listed here. NA does not endorse any particular online format, but if you want to set up a meeting, your group can also use the server set up below.

<https://discordapp.com/invite/xQTUGBN>

This has some resources already included, such as literature, and it has plenty of capacity for people to join. You can just use the space called "**Meeting Voice Chat**" and the person who set it up (Jamie W) can help you get added to the meetings list time. Just share the link with anyone else who wants to come.

Other options our fellow ship already uses are **Skype** and **Bluejeans**.

Virtual NA is a globally based collaborative service resource project whose primary focus is to provide a meeting search for both Online and Phone line meetings of Narcotics Anonymous hosted from different countries around the world.

www.virtual-na.org

For more information please send an email to

admin@virtual-na.org

LURKING IN THE DARKNESS

*Lurking in the darkness,
Hiding in the shadows
Waiting and watching
patiently in their positions*

—
*in trepidation they await
for the perfect opportunity to strike
the minute you are alone. when no one is watching. no one is around
to save you*

—
*Out of sight for some
out of mind for many
the ones not walking in the light allow
The Darkest demons to come and stay but those that are unaware are
the Ones that let them play*

—
*those without fear or hesitation they unknowingly invite them in.
realising only once
it's too late
there's no escape. They have found a home and they're there to stay.*

—
*It's all fun and games until they are told to go away. they no longer
want to play they choose to disobey.*

—
*your thoughts, time and energy become consumed You lose
everything you once held near or dear. your soul is no longer your
own. You've been overthrown leaving you so alone.
Haunted And harassed until finally you give in to their doom and
gloom.*

Broken and Beaten you feel the drain.

—
*leaving you in a world of pain.
as Reality hits, the fear sets in.
followed By the overwhelming
regrets, remorse, shame, terror
and sadness of the broken Being You've Become as a result of your
tormented Relentless days been and gone.*

—
*Never mind the fallen.
You can't save those who don't want to be found.
Instead focus on the discovery of recovery The Ultimate weapon
strong enough to conquer the war raging on within.*

—
Inner peace is the key to conquer the mysteries of the Beast.

-The Bent Gent -

POETS' CORNER

Refrain

Kids now use your brain

Don't lose your life in vain

Don't you see your life, your dollars will end up down the drain

Eventually it'll be too much as you jump before a train

And splatter goes your brain

And only memories remain

Just say no, don't do it kids

From drugs you should refrain

Faye M.

Inner child

Thinking of you every empty night
I can't believe, I let you out of my sight
Please don't ask me if this was right?

God please help my flame ignite
We grew apart

I've spent all my adult life running
I wasn't there when the storm was coming

It stole my heart, we grew apart
I didn't know there were two of me
If only I could of seen, the little me.

My whole life I tried to stop my chest from breaking
Nothing could stop my heart from aching

My consumed emptiness filled to my core.

Opening that cubby house door
Loneliness so heavily profound
My safety, know where to be found

Due to our disconnection
I lost all my sense of direction
And only since my reflection
I'm not trying to find perfection

I went through so much without you
I stayed alive just to meet you

My inner child speaks with a whisper

Hey, Excuse me mister
Why have you been so vain
Don't leave me behind again

Seeing you again brings me to my knee
You can help me build this Christmas tree.

With tears and laughter
We are together once more
I will hold you,

this is what I was looking for

You are the only thing that makes me complete

let's look back and press delete
Back in my arms, my heart sings
Thank you for giving back my wings

Without you, I had my fake smile
But I'm blessed, both ours names are Kyle

Anon.

POETS' CORNER

am I giving up, have I had enough?
I can't remember the last 3 years; they keep flashing by
an inch of this, a gram of that, an ounce of love, that got taken back
(you came at me in waves, wrapped me in a blanket)

broken down and numb, I was stolen
my wandering eyes picking up on the truth a dark composition cuz I was surrounded by self-made zombies
now I can't even walk down these once so vibrant streets, one step, fuck... a step too deep.
everything in this city is now so god damn cheap,
these alleys speak the truth of the divide,
the line is blurred in black and china white,
I put my feet to the gutter and did the whole walk upside down
I was trying to find home, I did this walk, underground...

with you, alone, with you alone,
an outlaw in his clean skin, living our lives like bonnie n Clyde the streets our guide
we lived in supplied till you had nowhere left to hide,
your freedom taken, tried. so I had to make my own,
bonnie in the jungle all alone...
your love was my air polluted, reducing my lung(love) capacity
I was locked in a cage, a hot mess burning through my days.
melting away.... waiting for your lips, breathing in your scent that you left lingering in my mind,
hips were hungry, life so lonely, money was running low, emotions were getting dense
sweating out the truth... so far removed from reality, I had no sense.
I went searching for myself in a den of mazes
beneath the cracks id see particles of my youth then it faded, all I found.... can't be translated.

I held out my thirsty soul to save yours from cracking when in truth I needed hydrating,
I forgot the mechanics behind a smile, I gambled life with love, independence with dependence security with
entropy,
how could I be so blind to defend all the insufficiencies.
I'm done with chasing circles, my legs are tired, it's time to stop (n retire)
release regret (inhale)...
follow my breath. (exhale)
I'm on a mission for a meaning, a personal journey to
(I gave my health, my heart, years apart,
my true self...

damn, I miss the ocean now that I think back, must've thought I was swimming,
cause u came at me in waves, wrapped me in a blanket, that dissolved all my pain, until it came back in the
form of a chain... (I drowned, you drained)

let me let go, let this dissolve...
let me let go, let me evolve.
let me let go...
dissolve.

Lana J.

HOPE AND EXPERIENCE IN EARLY RECOVERY

I am writing this partly for my own benefit and partly in case it is of benefit to another addict ... meanwhile isn't that true for EVERYTHING that we do in NA?

I just got my 90-days badge last week. I have made it to 60-days once before then "busted".

So what is different about this time?

I think that the reading at an online meeting I was at last week spoke of a very important point. It was about how we live our spiritual NA principles within our family. If we run away to NA meetings in the same way that we used to run away to use, then has anything really changed at home?

I still find that prioritising family and prioritising NA recovery can be quite difficult. In my first round of recovery, I only went to 2 meetings per week. I was convinced that I had gotten the spiritual principles really well.

In my own mind I was already more spiritual than Budha, Gandhi, Jesus and Mohammed all put together.

Then I was thrown into a very challenging social situation for a few days, and guess what... I busted. I became a very angry, grumpy twat, and the obvious thing to do was to use.

Then my sponsor told me that I needed to start doing 90 'n' 90. He also told me that I needed to pray for THE GIFT OF DESPERATION.

I didn't understand it, but I did what was recommended to me. Then in a meeting it happened. An older, cleaner member said to me:

"Bo, you have no idea how much you need to be in these rooms. All the really awful stuff like jail, institutions, losing everything, that has not happened to you YET. But if you keep using then it is only a matter of time before it does."

That was like a smack in the chops for me. Like a serious wake up call.

Since then I have been making much more effort to live the principles of honesty, willingness and open mindedness at home. I'm also making an effort to do some step-work a couple of times a week. I still lose my sh*t quite often. But what is strange is how quickly and how fully my family seems to forgive me and move on. I don't resent my family as much as I used to either.

To finish off, I reckon it does not have to be family OR Narcotics Anonymous. Sometimes our family needs to understand that they have to work around us so that we can attend a meeting... and sometimes we have to work around our family, and go to a different meeting, or an online meeting so that we can be there for them too.

Thank you for letting me share. Keep coming back!

Bo G.

Previous ARSC treasurer shares

(Continued from page 9)

I feel you need to know how NA funds are spent from putting into the basket to keeping NA alive and carrying the message all over the world.

Monies from meetings, after their own financial needs are taken care of (rent/literature/tea/biscuits), are then forwarded to their area service committee, who after they have taken care of their financial responsibilities pass on monies to the regional service committee.

The region has a responsibility to ensure that its sub-committees of (PR, IT Services, Indigenous committee, NA Today, Outreach) are funded for their projects to further carry the message within Australia.

Once funds have been established for these committees and area representatives who attend the meeting have requested any funds for workshops etc., then monies is passed on to the World Service Office of NA and also to the Asia Pacific Forum to help NA Communities in the Asia Pacific Region who are struggling.

Monies that go to the World NA Office ensure that our literature continues to get printed and also assists with the World Convention.

I'm not sure people really know how much money is required to print and distribute literature around the world in many different languages.

It has been an absolute privilege to serve the fellowship of NA in Australia and to have been involved in the growth of NA, helping to carry the message, protecting the fellowship by implementing systems to safeguard NA funds, to uphold the traditions and concepts and to have grown personally as well.

Service is a challenge, but such a rewarding experience, and I have made some long-lasting friendships with people all around Australia and the World.

Thank you NA for allowing me to serve.

Yours in loving service,

Janet P.

MY STORY

I grew up on the north side of Brisbane.

Growing up in the 80's I was the youngest child out of 5. And by the time I was a teenager most of my brothers and sisters had left the house. My parents both drank heavily, and I remember spending a lot of my childhood in clubs and pubs. Waiting around, hanging around for my parents playing the video games.

School was confusing and I could never seem to concentrate well. Later I found out that I was put in school too early, and I could not see ever see the board because I was short-sighted.

I would like to say that my involvement with drugs began with family members giving them to me, and I was simply a victim. But though they later became a central part of my involvement, the first time I bought and used drugs was from another person, done on my own free will.

Marijuana quickly became the centre of my life. Buying, selling and using it, I became the school's dealer, and being a dealer became my personality.

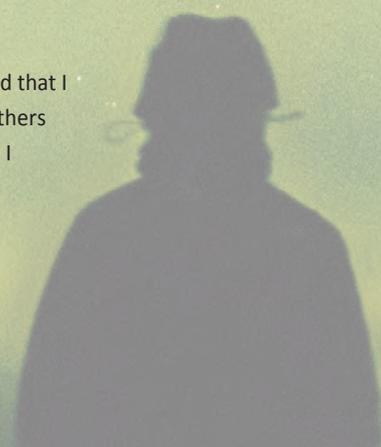
I quickly escalated to LSD, mushrooms, then by the end of school it was crystal meth, before my drug of choice for 10 years ... heroin.

My life spiralled out of control, soon I was on the streets committing petty crimes and selling drugs. Running from the law, other people, in and out of prison, then onto the methadone program.

I jumped off the methadone program, as well as heroin, and managed to get nine years clean on my own, only to relapse with ice. I realised I was powerless over this disease.

After coming in and out of the program for a few years, I realised that I could not do this on my own, I needed the help and support of others and the program, and I finally made a decision to commit to it. I got myself a sponsor and have committed to work the steps and live the life I was meant to live.

Tony M.



IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT

I had a chat with one of the BROTHERS yesterday who comes to the prison meeting that we attend every Sunday.

He has organised and coordinates the recovery meetings with the intention of helping others who have ended up in jail through addiction.

He also runs the Basic Text and the 12 Step study meetings that are held during the week. His commitment to service is inspiring and has resulted in seeing one of the boys last week at a meeting outside, a direct reflection of the service work being done on the inside.

Hopefully this will continue to maintain momentum that doing RECOVERY SERVICE has provided.

Another important aspect that needs to be mentioned is that the BROTHER has 20 years left to serve. He is 65.

Personally, he is inspiring me to help keep my shit together and to stay HUMBLE. Things could be a lot worse.

It works if you work it. Just For Today.

Tawa, WA

Super giving
potato
keeps its
recovery
another
day!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THE WHOLE STAIRCASE...

I look back and don't even know how I got here, I stumbled, I fell, I used, I abused, I stayed stuck & silent, although my destruction spoke louder than my words ever could.

I now realize, I confused independence with self-will. I shut out the world, when I truly needed help because I used to see vulnerability as weakness, but most of all, because I was in mouth of the river called denial. Hindsight is bittersweet, as today, I know that my addiction thrived in isolation, when all my heart sought for was connection.

To hide the darkness I felt within, I formed a mask very early on in life but in doing this, I also blocked any light.

I was seeking something, but I was looking in all the wrong places. I would consume something to make me feel whole for a while, then what I consumed left a void of emptiness deeper than before. I sought out external validation whether it was in people, places, things, until what I consumed, consumed me.

I couldn't put the drugs down, they felt good, until they didn't make me feel at all. They built a wall around me, that blocked me from my spirit, from my heart, and from any connection to anything greater than my own obsessions.

Addiction served me as a place of retreating from myself, from the disease I felt permeate every part of my being.

I relapsed year after year, I was consumed by fear and self-will, until I hit a rock at the bottom that steered me into complete admission to how powerless I was. Sitting there 6 years into a daily dependence, my soul felt like it was withering and I felt a type of despair I can't even put into words.

JUST TAKE THE NEXT STEP

I was led to the fellowship through a detox years earlier when I wasn't ready to absorb a thing. How I found my way back, I call that a higher power's work. The fellowship gave me the courage to detox and try a new way in my darkest hour, the program gave me a path of getting to know the connection I sought out in chemicals.

Bit by bit, I started to know the meaning of faith, I started to feel the power of courage, I started to FEEL without immediately fleeing. I built a foundation that helped me grow my spiritual practice, and strengthen my connection to my higher power, which fills me with love and everything active addiction robbed from me.

I sit here and I wonder, how can I express a gratitude for being shown another way of life?

I think it's by living and showing up one day at a time, living clean and in my integrity and sharing the process. Because what you say or do could be that switch for someone who hasn't quite got the message in a way they needed. Serve others and you serve your highest self, because I could have never done this without YOU, just like I know you couldn't have done it without me, there's a power in "we".

Writing this, I glance to the sky and I can say with gratitude I don't feel like I am being swallowed whole, I feel a unity, knowing wherever I am, whatever I do, I am not alone. The opposite of my addiction is connection, and just for today, I choose to connect with the higher parts of my being by living a life of recovery and inspired action.

I'll end this with a quote:

"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the next step."

Keep backing up, one day at a time.

Lana J.

GLUEING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER

Ah. Having a pretty dark night of the soul. Tricky slippery little thing crept up on me again. I'm not great at reaching out, it's a fear I haven't conquered yet, but here I am.

It still seems like such a frightening thing to reveal myself, and for the most part my beautiful recovery life is drama free and so far removed from what it was before, but it's like, there's still this thing in me... on the occasional night like tonight it grabs hold and it's too painful not to talk about.

For me, this disease is truly centred around a lack of connection, an inability to trust in myself and others. Self-hatred that feeds off the idea that I'm unlovable, unlikeable, unworthy. There is something wrong with me, what if it was found out — the entire world is a threat.

I lost my mum and soul provider and best friend when I was a child, my dad died not long after, though I never really knew him. My foster family dissolved when I was 16, moved in with my first boyfriend and found him passed away in the tree behind the house before I was 20, got further and further lost in my addiction, became estranged from the remainders of my extended family, and from there on every decision I made, every person I willed into my sphere was an unhealthy mutually abusive one. Reinforcing the unlovable unlikeable unworthy lie.

And it is a lie. Inside of me, just as inside of every one of you, there is a light. An intuitive warm all-encompassing light that knows the way and knows what's right and is made of pure love. It calls for me to find my way home. Its brought me here, on a journey of self-discovery, shedding, rebuilding, freedom. To you guys.

Because of each and every one of you beautiful souls and the unfathomable luck that we've had in finding out that we might just be a little broken and can rebuild if we want. Because of the insurmountable beauty and backbone of the program I've found and the people within, I'm slowly glueing these pieces back together.

Some nights are hard. Sometimes when I'm feeling my broken bits much more than the healed ones. Some nights feel black and unsupportive and so so very lonely. Here's the power though — this is just a night. Sleep will soon come, my dog will spoon me to sleep, that light inside me whispers that tomorrow the sun will rise, I'll rise with it, dust myself off and continue on this healing path. No need to run. It won't do to hide, I can feel all the feels and know I'll be ok.

With love, Zoe B.

The Miracle is Happening All Around Me

The past year has been a day to day experience, struggle, challenge and a bloody achievement.

Through my journey I have been reborn into a courageous, loveable, patient, compassionate, present, assertive, recovered woman with the world at the end of my fingertips.

Through brokenness, sadness, emptiness and soulless I was introduced to desperation, through desperation I was introduced to powerlessness, through powerlessness I was taught to surrender. Surrender wasn't like I always thought.

I always thought surrendering was a weakness in life.

I soon felt my heart, my gut, my soul, my mind and my body surrendering to someone, everyone who had hope that there was a better life for me out there. It came to something quite traumatic in my life to happen for me to completely surrender to the fact that whatever insane thing I was doing ... wasn't working.

I was then dropped to my knees at the doors of Rehab.

If there was a living personage of self-pity, it would have been me. But the feeling didn't quite match with my self-pity this time. I could feel that something I was about to do was right. There was a drive coming from my soul, the soul I had sold for a half-weight a long time ago.

I had hope, I had faith, I had a drive to succeed, to prove everyone who ever doubted me in my past, to put my two middle fingers up and say stick this in your life now where it fits.

I wanted it so bad, so badly I 'white knuckled it' daily, I kicked and screamed, I stayed until the miracle happened, I seen the light.

Whatever light that was, all I did was 'trust the process of change' and discover that I can have whatever I want in life, if I put my full self in wanting to succeed. Obviously, with all the suggested things to keep me well and keep me on track.

In my life the miracle is happening all around me, every day, every experience is a lesson whether it's with me or through someone else. If I'm open to learning, then I will receive. My heart is so open with love right now.

With using all my tools I have learnt along my journey, I can honestly say that I used them all today!! I am following my gut, my heart, compromising and pulling back when I feel I should. The growth that I am learning daily about myself and staying true to myself gives me so much fulfilment in life today.

I'm so grateful for my loving patient family, Thank you for your honesty, open mindedness, courage, compassion and support. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you. Never give up on me, this is me.

Yours kindly, Jenna T.



PHOTOGRAPHS

An insight into gratitude

Photographs, they are still images, a moment frozen in the construct of time.

And as I sit here looking at this photograph of me in addiction, I see a fractured soul, a cry for help, a thirst for hope.

As I look at this photograph, a subtle sadness envelopes me as well as a strong sense of gratitude, and this is only another insight to what recovery has given me. The ability to feel from both sides of the heart, and breathe through it, knowing that I am guided and always have been, if only I surrender.

17 months ago, I took my first step of surrender, my admission of powerlessness and my deep longing for change.

As I started connecting with honesty, vulnerability and faith in the rooms, I started connecting with this within myself, and I sit here today overlooking a completely different type of photograph, one of ease, and this is not because I have it all figured out, quite the contrary, it's because I don't and I have accepted that with absolute humility.

I have heard, living your recovery, many a time throughout my time in the fellowship, and for me, today, that means living in a state of well-being, inspired action, surrender and flow.

This program is my foundation, and the steps are my passageway to clearing all things that no longer serve me so that I can live out what my higher power has planned for me with no obstruction.

JUST FOR TODAY, I AM CLEAN,
I AM HERE IN THIS BODY, I AM HOME.



This issue's artwork kindly donated by Shyanne C.

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

