

NA TODAY

Free Publication

Of The Australian Region

Celebrating Women

March 2021



International Events

Due to COVID, most international conventions have been cancelled, but it's never been easier to connect with our international brothers and sisters. Virtual NA collects information about online meetings all over the world and has an easy to use meeting schedule..



Virtual NA

NA Meetings Online & by Phone

Bringing Narcotics Anonymous Meetings to Remote or Isolated Addicts from around the world who may, for whatever reason, be unable to attend local face to face meetings.

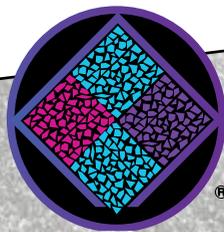
www.virtual-na.org

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.

For more information please send an email to admin@virtual-na.org

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



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

NA Today remembers those who passed away without hearing the message of Narcotics Anonymous.

We would also like to recognise those who celebrated milestones recently. Congratulations!

"Front and back cover artwork donated by Janis S"

Dear readers,

The theme of this issue is celebrating **women** in recovery.

I know for me, one of the areas of growth has been around learning how to allow a space for women to recover in NA. As an addict, I can be quite selfish and inconsiderate, and one group I had little consideration for in the past has been the women in my life, both in my family and my partnerships.

In my earlier recoveries, I used the rooms as a dating service, and paid the price for that behaviour in part with relapse and more misery using. So, this time around, I committed to staying out of relationships for a few years, and that gave me the capacity to learn how to allow space for newcomer women to work on their recovery.

After being clean for five years, I'm now in my first real adult relationship (with a so-called 'normie'). It's hard, but also a real blessing and gift of recovery to learn to support another human being and their projects.

But that's enough from me. The NA Today committee has a new vice-chair who, most fortuitously, is a woman! So, we thought it the perfect chance to introduce the wonderful Caroline Z...

YILS, Heath W

CELEBRATING WOMEN

Welcome to a new year and the first edition of NA Today for 2021.

In this issue we celebrate women in all their facets and forms.

Prior to coming to NA I had lost the ability to have any relationships at all. I feared other people. I no longer saw myself as a man or a woman, just a subsistent burden on the human race.

As I have stayed clean this core self belief has shifted and changed. By acting like a person I have come to feel like a person. I have come to value my mother and in turn have come to value being a mother. My respect for my daughter has grown and this has been modelled to me by the women in NA. My sponsor and friendships have taught me how to be a person again and how to love and be loved.

This issue is a homage to the women in NA that have changed all our lives. We celebrate what it is to be a woman in Narcotics Anonymous. We celebrate our sponsors, our mothers, our friends and our children and reflect on the impact women have had on our recovery and our lives. After a year as crazy as 2020 we could all use the some comfort and what better way to begin than a celebration of what is closest to us all!

Happy New Year!

YILS, Caroline Z.

My Name is Kobie

Those words took many years of pain and internal torment to finally admit. The program calls this hitting rock bottom, being given the gift of desperation and surrendering. They say that we 'surrender to win'. I certainly didn't feel like I was winning when I first found NA but, I needed to come to that point in order to have the willingness to try anything and thank goodness I did because I certainly feel like I'm winning today!

A week ago, I celebrated 5 years clean and I feel proud of it. This is my second go at life on life's terms, in the 'no matter what' club! At 5 years clean last time, I had all the outward appearances of recovery, I studied and earned a bachelor's degree, I got married, I worked, earned money and paid my bills, I was a good little Christian and I worked a solid Christian program. I held bible study groups, did morning teas and all sorts of service. I was doing all the right things!

Except, I stopped attending meetings, talking to my sponsor and doing any type of NA related recovery program. You could say, I had successfully floated out the doors of NA on a cloud of religious zeal! At some point I decided that the program of religion would be enough and that I didn't need the NA program anymore! I had deceived myself! I fell for my own lies! I didn't have the level of



and I am an Addict.



honesty the NA program requires back then. I was still in a heavy cloud of denial and couldn't see my poor decision making.

Church was great because I didn't need to work any steps, share or talk about my feelings! I always struggled with these things because I was constantly in fear about what people thought of me. Away from NA I could stay in a bubble of denial and continue to allow fear to rule my life! Choosing religion over NA had effectively isolated me from everything I needed most.

Even though I was clean back then, I battled in myself constantly. At six and seven years in, I couldn't figure out why I was still so unhappy. The truth is that I was a dry addict, white knuckling it through life. I was still ruled by the same self-obsession, fear, self-loathing, self-resentment and self-pity, I originally entered the rooms with. My ego was in charge and I was running completely on self-will – my old ways. I didn't know any of this back then, how could I have? I stopped working the steps at Step 5 and left before any miracles happened! All I had were the same coping mechanisms, I always had. Basically, I didn't continue the program and I didn't experience the character change required to find freedom from this destructive bondage to self.

At 8 years clean, my marriage was in shambles, on the brink of divorce. I blamed my husband for my unhappiness, and I had forgotten all about what I had learned in NA. I'd hit an emotional rock bottom. I was desperate, alone and isolated. My disease had me right where it wanted me. Cunningly, it rationalised to me that perhaps a drink might help! Perhaps it could bring a spark back into my marriage and I'd never had a problem with alcohol so, why not! Surely, I would be okay now, right?

The thought of picking up a drink scared me because it reminded me where I got to in the end of my using and I didn't have any evidence that I could successfully drink without picking up drugs so, I put the idea on the back burner. Inevitably though, my situation continued to decline, and my disease continued to progress. Finally, in a vain attempt to save my marriage, I picked up drinking. From there it only took two years to pick up my drug of choice. The disease had won! The obsession and compulsion to use had me in its grips yet again and I was powerless to do anything about it. In less than a year, I lost everything. I knew then that I needed to stop but, I couldn't. There I was again totally broken and completely spiritually bankrupted by my disease.

I will always be grateful to the person who, 6 years ago, reminded me about NA – I had forgotten all about it! That's what happens when we stop coming! We forget. Today I know that I will never again stop coming to meetings and working this program. Continuing to work this program has brought me joy, freedom, self-discovery, self-forgiveness, self-compassion and so much more. A far cry from the pain I felt without it in active addiction or sobriety. I am an incredibly grateful addict today and I will keep coming back because this is the only way I know that works!

Koby C, WA.



Woman,

Take a moment to honour you.

An exercise.

I want you to close your eyes and imagine yourself at the beginning of this road.

Take a deep breath, and feel in to your body.

The body that has carried you, through the muddy trails of this disease.

Notice the breath travels down to the pocket of your heart. As you breathe in, I want you to envision the energy of love building inside you.

As you breathe out ; let out all that no longer serves you. Breathe out the fear, breathe out the shame, see it like smoke evaporating into air.

Breathe deeply, for breath is the essence of life. The life that you have helped co-create, as a woman in recovery, hand in hand with a higher power of your own understanding.

I call on you to celebrate the journey, whether it's day one or day 6000, you have earned this celebration, this honouring in life.

There is nothing more inspiring than a heart that rebuilds itself, nothing more magical than a spirit that comes back to life.

Woman, thank you for your courage. Thank you for your strength.

Thank you for your hope. Thank you for not giving in to the mud, and for choosing to stick it out.

For it's us altogether, as sisters and brothers.

As I celebrate you, I celebrate me, I celebrate us.

The divine within me, honours the divine within you, the divine within this fellowship, the divine within recovery.

One tiny step at a time.

Lana J



Hi .. I'm female by birth and I'm clean. I'm a mother and addiction runs in the family, both before me and after me.

I have tried to keep my identity as an addict like a card held close to my chest but this year during covid I took a risk and disclosed to my executive boss, 3 levels above my practice. The outcome was actually surprising: as his total response since that point has been nothing but respect and he now considers me a source of insight that may be valuable in the workplace, and he put me on a couple of committees and then began a program in the workplace where a trained worker in addiction comes in weekly as a service to staff.

What is it like to be a women in recovery I ask myself and I have to consider the gender issues. I identify as bisexual. I don't know that its much different being a woman in recovery to that of being a man but I can only see it from my perspective.

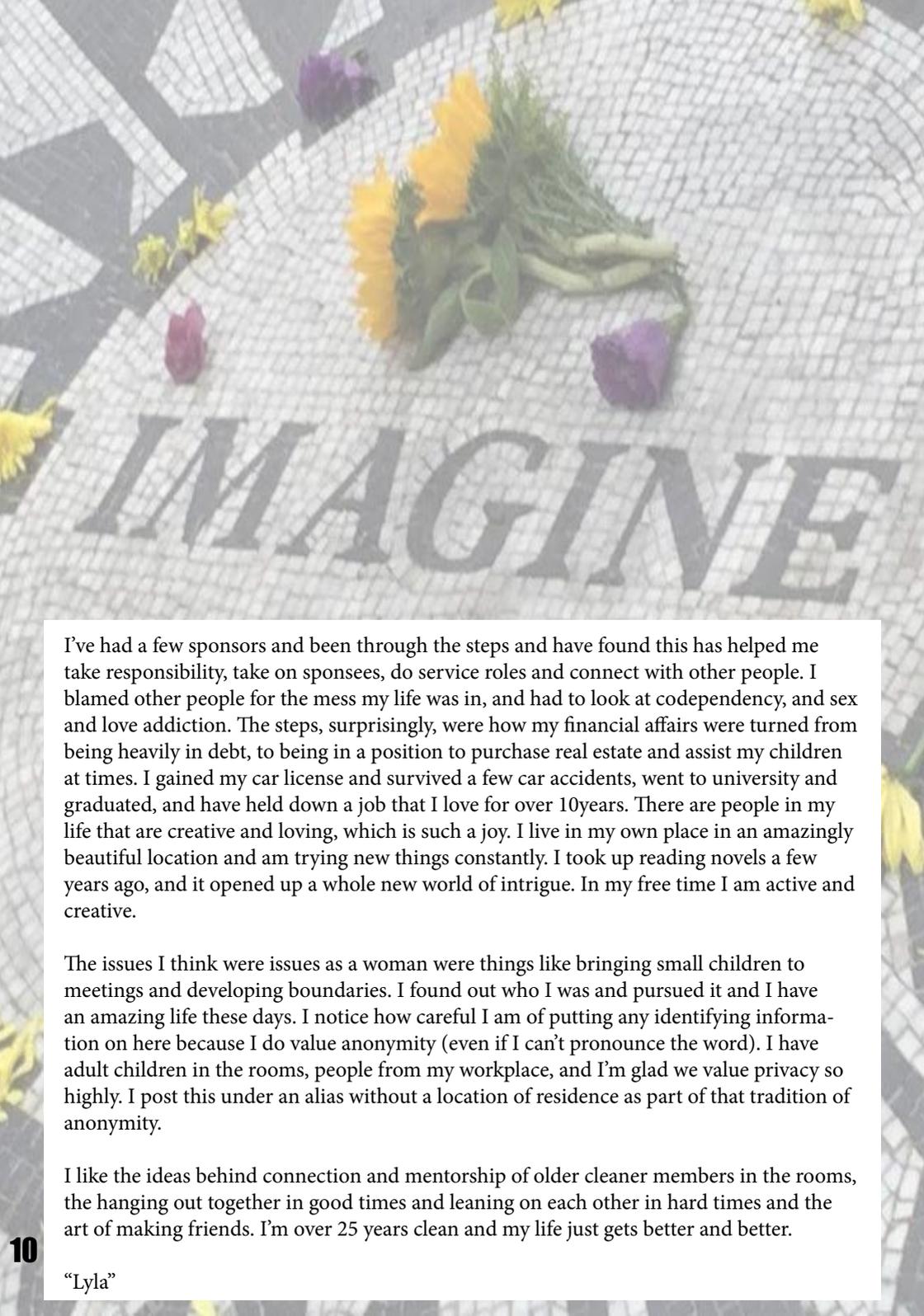
In the beginning I think it was a kind of white knuckling approach, with a sponsor and going to meetings, but it was dreadfully painful and I was full of angst. I had over a decade of being clean without any 12 step program and then it unraveled and I found myself desperate and ready to try anything to get clean and stay alive.

I didn't know why I was so driven to a bunch of unhealthy behaviors under stress that



caused a heap of pain to those around me and myself. In NA recovery I have developed language around it now, and call my original behavioural responses 'survival behaviours' or 'self-harm behaviours', and I have a list of things that I call 'bottom line behaviours' .. and I can now recognize my impulses and work on them, and don't have to compulsively act on them these days. I've replaced a lot of those behaviours with 'self-care behaviours' which are sometimes similar but not harmful (eg the impulse to shave my hair is replaced with temporary hair colour or a visit to a hair dresser; a bout of anorexia if it goes on more than a couple of days rings a bell of recognition inside and I make sure I eat a simple meal once or twice a day; I hold off on 'geographicals' and work to make my life more enjoyable on a daily basis where I live).

I came to see addiction as a marble under a checkered table cloth .. and every time I suppress an impulse in one area it pops up in another .. and have sought help from professionals to change my behaviours. I suspect that my addict was triggered from very young through severe burns and surgery and then sexual trauma, and later family breakdown. I guess normal development was disrupted and I was medicated and it took me a long time to sort things out and end up in NA.



I've had a few sponsors and been through the steps and have found this has helped me take responsibility, take on sponsees, do service roles and connect with other people. I blamed other people for the mess my life was in, and had to look at codependency, and sex and love addiction. The steps, surprisingly, were how my financial affairs were turned from being heavily in debt, to being in a position to purchase real estate and assist my children at times. I gained my car license and survived a few car accidents, went to university and graduated, and have held down a job that I love for over 10years. There are people in my life that are creative and loving, which is such a joy. I live in my own place in an amazingly beautiful location and am trying new things constantly. I took up reading novels a few years ago, and it opened up a whole new world of intrigue. In my free time I am active and creative.

The issues I think were issues as a woman were things like bringing small children to meetings and developing boundaries. I found out who I was and pursued it and I have an amazing life these days. I notice how careful I am of putting any identifying information on here because I do value anonymity (even if I can't pronounce the word). I have adult children in the rooms, people from my workplace, and I'm glad we value privacy so highly. I post this under an alias without a location of residence as part of that tradition of anonymity.

I like the ideas behind connection and mentorship of older cleaner members in the rooms, the hanging out together in good times and leaning on each other in hard times and the art of making friends. I'm over 25 years clean and my life just gets better and better.

"Lyla"



'Portrait of the Current NA Today Chair, Heath W. Drawn by the NA Today Vice Chair, Caroline Z.

Restless, irritable and discontent,
Those days that I spent –
In crack dens and hotels,
Either way, I was unwell,
In my mind, body and (cheap)
spirit,
And no one really wants to
hear it.

I feel conflicted every day,
Torn to push my friends away,
Guilt, shame and fear,
Is all that I can hear,
Won't these voices get lost?
Most times it has a cost,
It takes its toll,
Like rock and roll,
Sex is up there too,
And although these tears
aren't blue,
My bloodshot eyes don't lie,
I truly want to die,
If this disease kills, why (not)
me?
I can't live like this, surely?
Surely not,
I've lost the plot,
My mind is racing,
Back and forth I am pacing....

Breathe hun, it's only day one.

By Jess P.

INTENTION

Today I choose to stay
clean and overcome my
fear,

I choose to attend a
meeting for there is
something I need to
hear,

I choose to leave my will
behind and show up for
my life,

I choose to meditate my
mind, a prayer or two
will suffice,

I choose good today
and right over wrong,

I choose people and
places to where I be-
long,

I have the power for this
and much much more,

A positive intention
given to me from the
ones who've been here
before.

Mike C, Perth

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE

Loving you and loving me
Occurs simultaneously
I love you
And I feel the love
It may be directed at you
But I FEEL the love.

Loving you shows me
-How to be loving
-That I am not so different from you so
maybe I am lovable.
-That I have the capacity to love .
-That maybe others can love ME coz
it's SO EASY to love YOU.

When I feel loving I have juice to share
Kindness, space, time, compassion
I can be your sponsor, your listening heart, your cheerleader, champion,
coach, friend

When I don't love you
It's ALWAYS ABOUT ME
me feeling afraid
My thinking going astray
Jealousy, competition, scarcity, comparison,
resentment, fear of rejection

When you love me when I forget
The kindness of you dissolves the shield of fear and loneliness.
My vulnerability becomes sweeter
Your love becomes a beacon
Shining the path
Back to my own heart

Loving you is a gift to us all
I get to feel love
You get to receive my love
My love is about me
And when you receive it...
It becomes about we ...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE

Thank you.

**For not giving up.
For moving your feet when all
you wanted to do was sink.
For showing up and acknowl-
edging your truth even when
your voice shook. Thankyou
for the honesty in whatever
formation it came, whether
from a place of nurture or a
place of pain.**

**You taught me that change is
an action, that the power was
on the other-side of fear, that
wounds were only a part of the
make up and the journey was
one of healing through feeling.
I celebrate each day that I
don't suffocate my soul with
substances to which I never
had control, to each day
I show up in my truth which
differs from one moment to
the next, I celebrate the tears
and the laughter, because as
a woman you showed me that
I can stand on my own two
feet. Through co-creation we
build this foundation of women
rising above addiction- creat-
ing a life that isn't riddled with
destruction. A life that comes
from the centre of being.
I celebrate you as a woman,
as a mother, as a sister, as
a daughter, as a friend. As a
spirit rebuilding its strength.**

Lana J

**A poem found in stillness
seeking gods will
For you are joy and love**

**As the shadows lifted
from within
The light, love and
laughter**

**Were ready
To shine
For all to see**

**For you have been called
Joy and love**

**For all to see
Go easy young man**

**For you are a treasured
soul
As boundless as the sun
shines**

Here to help heal all

Jabe G

The war on anger

Oh anger, for you are the great divider
Wars start, riots happen
Countries are divided in left verses right

Oh anger, if only you had a healthy place to go
If only they just realised that you were hurting within

Oh anger, for you to get through this
First you must let go

Not how usually would though
Its time to learn to heal me
And all the hurt within

For I must be revealed to be healed
And then the journey begins

For now no more
You hold with your shackles
In your prison no more

For today, comes forgiveness
And all the birds are singing

The little boy within me
Is at peace once again.

Jabe G

Today I am grateful for a life
beyond my wildest dreams.

Today I am grateful to get throw
the feelings of yesterday and not
run away from my feelings but sit
through them and use the tools of
the program.

Today I am grateful to send a
proposal for a job but not have
anything attached if she will agree
to it or not.

Today I am grateful for the inter-
esting meeting and listening to
everyone's different views on the
recovery topics. We do recover.

Today I am grateful for gratitude
lists and I am going to miss writ-
ing them and sending them as I
am going away on a 1 week silent
meditation retreat to continue this
journey in recovery.

Today I am grateful to be happy in
my own skin

Hi. My name is Keira, and I am a recovering addict.

I grew up not knowing who I was. Not knowing where I came from. I felt alone most of the time. My mother wasn't present for my childhood and was in many abusive relationships. I knew all I wanted in life was to not let men or women treat me the way she let them treat her.

School was my escape from home, until it wasn't. It would become a living hell, I was bashed and beaten at school for being aboriginal. So, I would disown the fact I was, and I began straightening my hair and wearing makeup, so I wasn't seen as different. That didn't really work.

Then I found the crew of people who would smoke weed and wag school to get high or drunk. This escalated quickly. I dropped out

of school and I was soon injecting meth. I bounced from one abusive relationship to another. All of them were drug fueled and continued to remind me of how worthless I felt.

Then I fell pregnant. I thought this would be my escape. I can love this little human and get out of this crap of a life I was living.

That only lasted about 6 months after I had my daughter, and I was back on the drugs and back in another abusive relationship.

I lost my daughter.

I lost all hope.

I had lost myself.

I didn't want to give up, I wanted to get my daughter back, but I didn't know how. I contacted a drug rehab, I begged them for a bed, but I was still so scared.

I was welcomed with smiles, introductions and a warm loving atmosphere.

I attended my first NA meeting

with that rehab, it was a woman's meeting. Fuck women I thought. I was hugged and loved. We sat in a circle. I was surrounded by beautiful women who spoke of a thing called life and I wanted it. So, I worked my ass off at the rehab. I cried, yelled and stayed as long as I needed to.

3 months after I left rehab, my daughter came back into my care. This is when my life really began, I started to see this beautiful spirit come back into her. I was present for her and she loved it.

I was able to teach her how to love herself, how to be proud of who she is. I started to acknowledge my culture and began asking questions to heal my spirit. A massive part of my recovery is being proud to be an aboriginal woman.

Today I teach Noongar in schools and share my knowledge where I can. I also attend regular meetings where I can hear the message of despair and struggle, to be reminded that at any moment if I pick up a drink or drug I could be right back where I began.

Life is so fulfilling today. I have an amazing Fiancé who respects me and loves me for who I am. I don't need to change myself to be loved. I am surrounded by amazing women in recovery, and we encourage each other and build each other up instead of trying to pull one another down.

If I can make it through the wreckage that was my life.

YOU CAN TOO.

Keira

What did a woman mean to me before I was connected?

A woman for me was a wary delicate strength, a woman had to fight for what was hers, and that meant always being on guard. A woman was either chasing or being chased by the wolves.

As my addiction took hold, the essence of what it meant to be a woman was warped in to even more of an instinctual survival. No trust, no connection, a bit like wounded animals in luminous lighting.

What I started to realize is that my view of women was a direct view on myself, the fear, the lack of self trust or love was a direct manifestation to the lens I saw the world with. When I came into the rooms, trembling with fear and defeat, the first hands around me were those of a woman.

Saying, come here love. I'll protect you.

I have never known this from anything but a maternal figure in my life.

That opened a tiny increment that later I would learn was trust. A microscopic surrender to the "we", to the union in recovery.

After getting into too much pain, emotionally, mentally physically and spiritually- I finally decided to stick with a sponsor, a woman who connected with me from very early on and made the decision to start the journey with the steps. I clutched to dear life by showing up one day at a time and this woman gave me the simple answers to my long winded questions that were almost always characterised by doubt and the reminiscence of shame.

This beautiful woman helped steer me on the path in getting touch with my spirituality, she helped me see that it was a loving higher power of my own understanding. She told me it was ok when I weeped in step 5, and would always empower me with the affirmation "you are enough"

I am now working with another amazing woman who has taught me to own my shit, to put in action with courage and trust the power of the universe.

I sit with her beside the fireplace talking about my fears, and in the same breath my hopes and my dreams. I cherish the space, and the essence as she is teaching me about being true to who I am, which is no longer a wounded child but a woman who can kiss her wounds.

A woman for me is no longer a chaser or being chased, she now runs with the wolves, not looking back. A woman dances in her truth, through the pain and the joy. I am now becoming what I mistrusted for so long.

Which was a woman who is rediscovering who she is without the bondage of shame, an expression of divinity without the ideology.

Lana J

IF YOU WANT TO USE DRUGS
WELL THEN, THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS!
IF YOU WANT TO STOP USING DRUGS
THEN, THAT'S OUR BUSINESS!

spirit knows no colour!
spirit knows no shame!



DONT BE SHAME!
PUT YOUR HANDS UP & ASK FOR HELP!



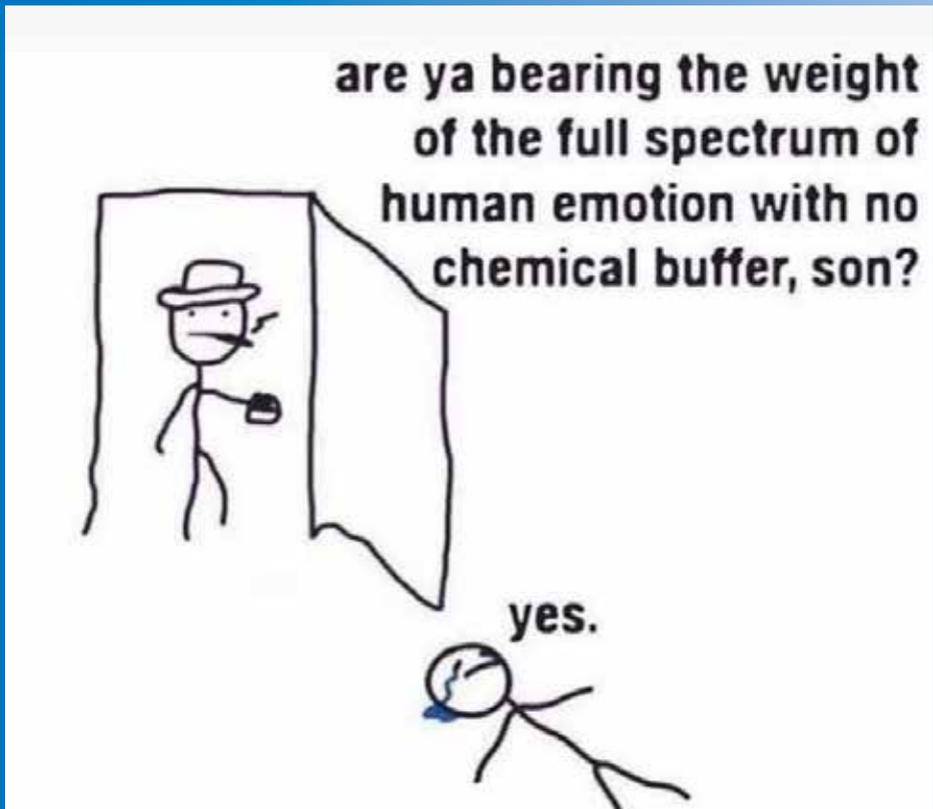
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS - 1300 852 820
na.org.au

SHHH... I'M HIDING
FROM 13-STEPPERS



**Remember...
you can only keep what
you have by giving it
away**

**BE LIKE SUPER
GIVING POTATO.
WE LOOK FORWARD
TO RECEIVING YOUR
SUBMISSIONS.**



We met at an underground dance party. Madness had already wrapped it's insinuation around my sensitive heart and i felt cloudy and unsure. Her smile shone slightly shyly. I remembered the light.

Next time we met we were in another state.
She felt like a life-preserver to my drowning.
But who would have known -we were both made of water .

I met her next in the fog of another early recovery. I was beyond grateful for her outstretched hand. A friendship was solidifying. Formed of love that existed beyond fears and insecurities. A sweet yet sometimes bumpy ease. Elemental.

Formed of fire and courage. Poetry and dark long nights of running and not running away.

Dingy nightclubs, drunken girlfriends and silver fish. I slipped into the haze once again.

She let me go, just enough. A world of creativity and expression, as much trust as I could bare and the beginnings of community connected us
She let me go, just enough. Keeping the door open with her heart. She didn't even know if I would ever walk through it again. And still she kept it open.

Years passed. I didn't tell all the truth and she didn't ask. When I was ready, she was there.

As surprised as me.

Gratitude became our medium. Meetings and phone calls, appreciation and acknowledgement, empathy and sharing...

Then snippets and shafts of memories years come rolling in on the tide of life, delivering jewels more precious than any gold or money could exchange.

A life.

Of learning each other. And ourselves. The unparalleled therapeutic value.

No words can adequately convey the gratitude for so many shared moments, wisdoms and worries, held together by breath and prayers, willingness and honesty, perspective and this solid ground of
Just for today.

For A life.

Just for today I will have trust in someone who believes in me.

With this I have nothing to fear

Thankyou for believing in me

Anon



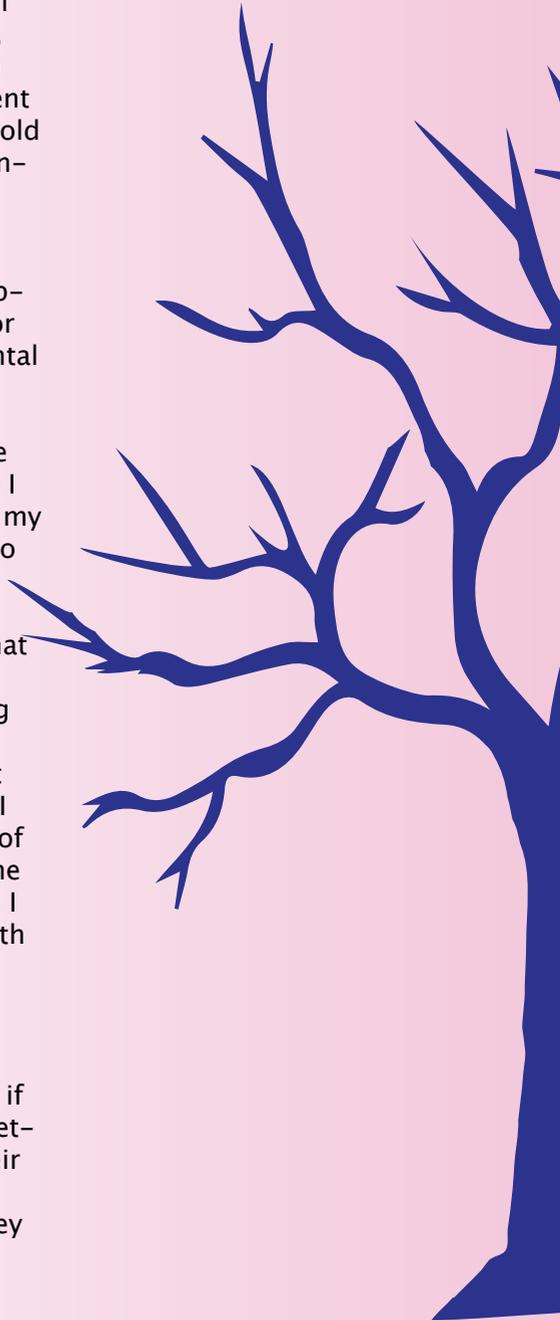
NA Today

Mid 1996 I had been struggling with my heroin addiction for a few years, trying to control my using, trying to stop altogether whilst trying to parent two young children, be a wife and hold down a good job with a large government organisation. It wasn't working.

I finally reached out and made an appointment to see the staff counsellor who to his credit was non judgemental and helpful, he gave me some info about a rehab in Northbridge. I had not considered doing anything quite that drastic, but I was desperate, so I called them. While I was waiting for my admission date it was suggested I go to an NA meeting.

While most things in my life from that time are vague memories at best, I remember walking into that meeting on a Wednesday evening across the road from the old Sunday times just off Stirling street, I remember what I was wearing, I remember the smell of the building, it was woody inside, the room we were in was up on the left. I had convinced my sister to come with me. I was petrified.

I had used that day, because I used every day, I would not have made it to the meeting without having used if I'm honest. We walked in as the meeting was starting, people making their way to their chairs with their cuppa and their bicky, smiling at me as they passed by. I struggled to make eye





contact. I made my way to the back of the room and my tears had already started to trickle down my cheeks, then people started to share.

My mind was blown, the flood gates opened, the tears were flowing. These beautiful shiny healthy people were talking about using drugs like I use drugs and they were clean, and happy and able to articulate what that was like for them and how they managed to stop and stay stopped for more than a pay check. It was incredible to me, that night was my “mustard seed”.

I recall feeling extremely overwhelmed not just by the friendliness of these people who identified as addicts but the information and experience they were so willing to share.

Soon after I went and did my 6 weeks at rehab which took me to meetings, I did the first 3 steps while I was there. I did not stay clean for long after leaving treatment that time. I had another crack at recovery a few years later with slightly more success, and got about 9 months clean time, this in itself was a bloody miracle as far as I was concerned.

Post treatment I took on a little service position and did a few more of the suggested things, until I didn't. That was the end of that attempt at trying to get my life together.

My last relapse took me there... all those places I never ever imagined I

would go, all the things I said I would never do. It took me years of using anything and everything I could get my hands on to distance myself from the recovery knowledge I had, but that mustard seed was always there.

That relapse lasted about 14 years until I was confronted with the tragedy of my partner who I loved dearly took his life. This was the rock bottom that got me back. I didn't care if I lived or died, I reached out again for help. 10th September 2014, I found myself back in residential treatment, doing meetings regularly and bit by bit I was surrendering. I left treatment after nearly a year and picked up doing service.

Service, service, service is what I had to do. I had no idea how socially awkward and anxious a person I was/am, this is one of the plethora of reasons I would use drugs. As part of my commitment to myself and my recovery I threw myself into different committees and took on service positions. I know myself well enough to know had I not made these commitments to others (I could not make those commitments to myself), I would sit on the peripheral and slowly step away and no one would notice I had gone.

The commitment I did make to myself is if I am asked to share, I share. These things have worked for me.

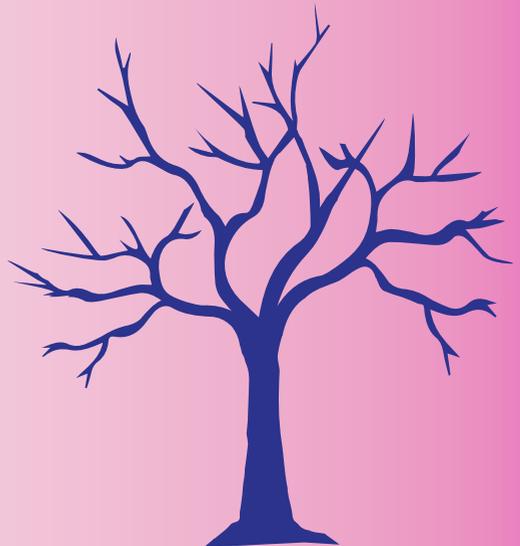
I have changed sponsors a couple of times, which has been a wonderful learning experience.

Whenever I travel, not that it has been much or far, I face my fears and find an NA meeting. I had a surreal moment having made my way to a meeting at night, by myself, in the middle of a city of millions in the city of Pune, India when the first person I spoke to, having introduced myself, asked if I knew another recovering addict very dear to me.

NA has given me so much. I am so extremely grateful to all those who have paved the way for me, who walk alongside me and those dear ones coming along, who remind me where I have been, it's these folks I treasure most. There is nothing else out there that could give me that- Connection.

Yours in loving service

Megs H



With or without my children

Hi, my name is Jayne, and I am an addict. The first time I said these words was at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting on May 24th, 2004, which was also my first day in rehab. I initially had mixed feelings about Narcotics Anonymous, I didn't feel very comfortable with the members being so welcoming, but I also desired it. I wanted people to be kind to me, but I was also repelled by their kindness.

My addiction had taken a big toll on me, so much so that I had to re-learn the absolute basics of life such as showering and brushing my teeth and hair each day. I also had to learn how to communicate with others. I lost the ability to have basic conversations with people, I was so lonely but also so uncomfortable around others. I was so full of shame and guilt that I often wore a hood in an attempt to hide my eyes. I believed that if people could see into my eyes, they would see all the bad things I had done.

My main shame and guilt was around losing custody of my three children four years previously and because of this, I was convinced I was the worst person in the world. Their father took custody of them because as my addiction progressed, I

could no longer take care of them, and my fourteen-year-old daughter had been forced to take on the mother role as well as attend school and tell lies to her father and other family members about my addiction in order to protect me. After the children left my care I fell into a whole new level of addiction and began to live a life that I could never have imagined. The more shame and guilt I experienced, the more I would use to mask the pain and vice versa. I believed that the kids were better off without me and I succumbed to a life of drugs, crime and degradation.

I had this idea, that once I got clean the kids would run into my arms and we would live happily ever after. This was not the case. My eldest daughter was pregnant with her first child and was living with her partner and my younger two had their own life with their father. The realisation of this was heart breaking for me, as all I wanted was to be with my children, but through my addiction significant damage had been done to both me and my family. So, I realised then that I had two choices, either go back to the life of addiction where I could continue to numb the pain or continue to go to meetings where I was promised that if I got a sponsor, worked the steps and be of service to others, I could recover. So, I chose the latter.

This year I will celebrate my 17th year in recovery, and I am still healing my relationships with my children and I think I always will be. I believe what works for me is that I continue to give them permission to heal, I don't put a time limit on it, I just keep on loving them regardless of where they are at with me. There was a five-year period that one of my children was estranged from me, but I kept praying and letting go regardless of the pain I was in. I am so grateful for the members who propped me up and fed me hope that one day I would have all three children back in my life. Today, through this program, I have all three of children in my life. I have also been blessed with seven grandchildren who know me for who I am today. My most memorable moment so far was Christmas 2020, when I had Christmas lunch with my three children for the first time since 1998. This had been my biggest dream for such a long time and through continuing contact with my Higher Power, it became my reality.

Oh my goodness what a gift and what a joy to be woman in recovery today. To be a respected member of society but more importantly to have self respect and self acceptance. I truly believe I'm clean today because of the Narcotics Anonymous programme.

Initially it seemed tough and unfair waiting for a bed in a treatment facility because there were fewer beds designated for women compared to men in WA in 2007. Anyway I got there and because I got introduced to NA by another woman in that facility I am still clean today. I asked her what she did on weekend leave now she wasn't using and she said " we do this" and took me to my fist meeting. We arrived and it was a woman who hugged me , welcomed me and said " keep coming back " .

I am the lady I am today because of the role models I have, the friendships I'm a part of, the women who have sponsored me and the women I sponsor. Growth, stability and security are forged through step work, service and a programme. I am eternally grateful to that first sponsor who told me to stick with women and stick with the strength. I believe this has kept me out of a heap of trouble. So I mainly did women's meetings in the fist few years because it took time for me to learn to trust myself around men. Because of my history with the type of drugs I used and the things I resorted to to get my drugs I'd had very dysfunctional relationships.

Some of the trials I endure in recovery are as a mother. My kids never came back into my are full time and recently a horrific family secret has been revealed , one that never even

made it onto my reservation list because I didn't consider was possible, and if wasn't for the commitment of women I respect going through similar issues and staying clean themselves.... well I know its possible to stay clean through adversities.

To be able to take a chance on a new career buy a house and learn to scuba dive has been inspired by the courage and tenacity of women in the rooms. I know how lucky I am to have been made welcome, even though I am not everyone's cup of tea I have found my tribe within the group.

My relationships with sponsors and sponsees are the closest I have ever experienced in my life. They most honest, compassionate and accepting in my life. The connection i experience sharing a programme, doing step work and sending and receiving gratitude lists fills my heart with joy, love, acceptance and appreciation.

Today I am a grandmother in recovery caring almost full time for four of my grandsons and I get to teach them this programme as I live it my life. A part of daily routine at tea time is to ask each other what the favourite part of day was, what was something we regret and how could we do it better tomorrow.

So yeh I'll keep coming back because just for today I never have to use again.

Serenity

COURAGE

change

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