



Anonymity

I want to talk about Anonymity. I spell it with a capital A to signify its importance to me and I hope its importance to you. When I think about Anonymity and 12 Step programs I think about the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of my (and your) identity inside and outside the rooms. My recovery is my business and no one else's unless I choose to share this information with someone. It seems that some people do not understand this, nor do they respect it.

When I finally surrendered and accepted that I was an addict and needed help, I

went to treatment in another county in order to protect my Anonymity. I did not want people I worked with or others to know I had an addiction problem. It was none of their business and still isn't.

Unfortunately, there is still a great deal of stigma and discrimination in regards to people with "addiction" issues. I have worked at a jail, a medical hospital, a treatment center, and in academia.

One would think that my co-workers would be educated in relation to addiction and recovery but, believe me, many of them do not have a clue. Some are judgmental, controlling and ignorant and again it is none of their business whether I am in recovery or not. I choose to keep my recovery private, but, at times, it seems rather difficult to protect my Anonymity.

When I go to recovery functions (e.g. conferences, workshops, dances) everyone has a camera; they are taking pictures of everyone else and posting those pictures on a social networking site with captions saying where they were and who they were with. Do you care if I am in the background of your picture and I want to keep my recovery private? I remem-

ber a time when cameras were prohibited from recovery functions. Today, we all seem to have these tiny cameras built into our cell phone that we just cannot live without. We go around clicking pictures of everything and everyone we see without regard to anyone's privacy. Social networking has thrown a huge curve ball into privacy and into the rooms. For many years we had no

idea what anyone's last name was, now we know their last name, their maiden name, their brother's name, their cousin's name, where they work, how many kids and dogs they have, etc. Privacy seems to be a thing of the past. I see announcements on these social networking sites... "so and so is speaking at this meeting or that place Friday night". Do we really



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need such postings? Did we ask permission of the person speaking if it was okay with them if we publicly broadcast their name and the fact that they are in recovery? When one posts in a private group it sometimes does not stay private and others (who are not in recovery) can and do see some of these posts.

Don't get me wrong—I love recovery, the 12 steps, and the people in—*Cont'd. p. 5*

The Beginnings of NA and the Importance of the Traditions

October 2011, was the 58th Anniversary of Narcotics Anonymous. Even after 58 years NA continues to grow and grow rapidly. As of the last count, there are over 58,000 meetings taking place each week in over 131 countries worldwide. Our literature is available in 39 languages with translations in process for 16 more languages.

But, we have all seen another side of NA; heated disagreements over what sometimes seems to be small matters. We have been part of groups and meetings where no one will take on any service commitment whatsoever and we have seen meetings shut down completely due to lack of support and attendance. And yet, NA continues to grow and move forward in spite of these difficulties. What is it about NA that keeps it moving forward?

To answer that question it is very helpful to look back at some of the attempts that were made to create a program of recovery for addicts before NA started in 1953. Leading up to that time, three things occurred that set the stage for addicts to begin to seek out a such a program.

First was the widespread availability of drugs in the US that came about during the 1800's; opium, its derivatives and cocaine were widely

available as over the counter medicines, tonics and was an ingredient in our most famous cola drink. By 1900 it is estimated that there were between 300,000 and 1,000,000 drug addicts in the US. As we know, drug addiction causes problems and by 1919, the sale of opiates and cocaine was registered, restricted and criminalized.

Second was the establishment of federally funded "treatment" centers. The US Public Health Service Hospitals opened first in Lexington, Kentucky in 1935 and later at Fort Worth, Texas in 1938. For the first time, large numbers of addicts and persons interested in treating them came together in the same place.

Last was the creation and establishment of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous beginning in Akron, Ohio in June of 1935. This was followed by the first edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* published in April of 1939 that presented the Twelve Steps to the world. It was now only a matter of time before addicts would begin to try to form groups and apply the AA principles to the disease of addiction.

One of the first addiction recovery based programs was started at the Lexington treatment hospital in February 1947. It was called the NARCO group and they incorporated the Twelve Steps adopted from AA and they

produced a newsletter called *The Key*. They were part of and supported by the federally funded Health Services Hospitals and their activities took place within those facilities. These groups continued to exist and meet until the 1960's.

One of the addicts that participated in NARCO, Danny C., was eventually discharged from Lexington and subsequently brought the recovery idea to the Salvation Army in New York City. The result was a new group that started meetings in the prison systems and eventually outside. The group was the first to use the name "Narcotics Anonymous." They developed and used "Thirteen Steps" that were roughly based on the Twelve Steps of AA and it was sponsored by the Salvation Army. The program also lasted into the 1960's not only in New York but other cities as well.

Another group that started in the Los Angeles in the early 1950's was called Habit-Forming Drugs ("HFD"). It was comprised of addicts attending AA meetings that met separately in small informal groups to address addiction. Although HFD also did not last, some of those that attended continued to look elsewhere for a program for addicts; one of those persons was Jimmy K, an addict who had been attending AA meetings since 1950.

A new group started in the

early summer of 1953 at a town called Moorpark, just north of LA. An AA member, Jack P. was instrumental in getting the first meeting started, but Jimmy K. would become one of the guiding forces in the coming weeks. As result of those meetings, a formal Governing Committee was formed and started meeting on August 17, 1953 in nearby Van Nuys, California. Minutes were written and six persons were present. Jimmy K was elected chairman.

The Governing Committee met seven more times and the name Narcotics Anonymous was adopted. By Laws were written that defined how the Group would operate and lastly, the first recovery meeting was planned. Their first recovery meeting took place on October 5, 1953, at the corner of Cantara Avenue and Clybourn Street in Sun Valley California, just north of Los Angeles; seventeen addicts attended. This meeting is considered to be the first meeting of Narcotics Anonymous as we know it today.

What was it about this group that caused it to grow into the international fellowship that it is today? Looking at the previous attempts, each was affiliated with an outside organization or in the case of HFD, dominated by one or two personalities. Affiliations and personality centered groups mean that they were not independent, not self supporting, not self governing, not anonymous and so on down the list of the Twelve Traditions. On the other hand—*Cont'd. p. 3*

The Perfect Path To A Perfect View

In the mist of holiday decorating, gift exchange and marathon meetings

I attempted to take the time to reflect back over this past year---to say goodbye to the good, bad and ugly of 2011. So I went to my grandparents' house in Lutz.

Their home has become a

refuge for me. After devotion and a hearty breakfast I'm off to my hike in the woods and to be alone and reflect.



I came across a wooded area that would on its other side promised a view of the lake which surrounds the community. I immediately stormed into the woods and then got lost and tangled up in a briar patch. Then the thought of snakes gripped me and I was paralyzed by fear. I immediately scrambled to call for help. It was then I noticed a path of dirt bike tracks and then a fence. I thought to myself that maybe if I follow

the tracks and stay within the fence's boundaries I can find my way out of these woods.

At this moment I had a spiritual experience. My Higher Power used this to illustrate to me the ugly of the past years. I was reminded of the saying, "If it takes you umpteen years to get into the

forest of addiction it will take that long to get out". I had been trying to do it on my own; taking short cuts. For instance, when I got lonely I would seek out tricks or porn to relieve the loneliness. When feeling empty inside I would use fried chicken to feel the void. Often, as I experience these feelings of *less than*, I would do some "retail therapy" (it's not just a girl thing for us men do it, too).

These attempts to take shortcuts to escape feelings have always left me tangled up in unmanageability. I would then God, my sponsor,

and my pastors to help me. They would lead me back to a path that led them to freedom with the spiritual principles that were boundaries of protection.

I continued to walk in the woods following the path of my dirt bike predecessors and I found myself the perfect clearing. *Man*, it was beautiful. I sat on a log and thought to myself, "wow, I was taking shortcuts that

would lead me to a view of a lake I heard others experienced and yet, this path is perfect for me".

My Higher Power heard this tree fall in the forest and knew where it was and the path I would need to take to arrive at the place He had created for me. I almost missed it by taking

shortcuts to get thing that others had. It's kind of like discovering God's dream for me. He knows the way to that dream and has given me a sponsor, pastors, a network, and the steps. If I follow these, it will lead to the perfect life for me—to my place in the world. This year I hope to stay to the path; to follow the path of those who know how to get out of the forest. This is my year to *man up*.

---Ira M.

Beginnings Of NA p 2—the By Laws of the first NA group stated that the Twelve Traditions would be followed in matters pertaining to the group. The fact that we still read the Traditions at every NA meeting today reaffirms NA's continued commitment to following them.

This is not to criticize these other groups and suggest that they did not help any addicts stay clean. These groups certainly did a lot of good, they helped a lot of people and they also helped clarify to others the necessity of following the Traditions in order to build a recovery program and fellowship that would endure. For a group of people that are often very opinionated and at times self willed, they are truly the ties that bind us and keep us together. —Kent C.

Sources:

Miracles Happen Revised
Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Copyright
1998, 2002

Transcript of Transcript of Jimmy K's 20th Anniversary Speech, August 18, 1973, Los Angeles, CA

NA World Services, Inc. Annual Report 1 July 2007-June 30 2008

Information about NA 2010 Pamphlet, NA World Services, Inc.

Secondary and corroborating sources only include Wikipedia Encyclopedia, various unofficial NA history websites and e-mail guidance from NA World Services.

Our Common Welfare

In NA we have a tradition or two for good reasons—to a great degree they protect the fellowship from inside and outside harm. Harm does occur but it is minimal if the members, as a whole, know what they are and how they work.

I was at two different meetings and got attacked verbally at the first one inside the meeting just after it ended and while everyone was still there. No one said anything to the member doing this to me and that was that.

The second one occurred outside after the meeting and again, no one did anything.

It is very important to think about what are you going to do when this happens to you.

The newcomer is the most important person in the meeting only in the context that we care for them having been where they are.

However our common welfare comes first as personal recovery depends on NA unity. I step up immediately anytime and anyplace this happens to another member because it is our tradition to do so, so that all members feel safe in an atmosphere of recovery.

This is why we share only

our personal experience strength and hope and we do not permit cross talk. For this and personal opinions lead to conflict most of the time.

There is no “I” in we, because we are all in the same boat and it will sink if we do not care for it properly

I have spoken to many people who have left NA for a lot of reasons none of which I can do anything about as I am not in charge, like you I am just a member, but I have been faithful to the practice of the Steps and Traditions.

I can tell you this, if it occurs anymore there is a good chance I will stop coming. I love NA but my common welfare comes first

and if I can't feel safe to share at a meeting or just be myself then I don't need this relationship any longer. After all this time, I can see that it is maybe a good idea.

So if you are new or old in the program, should we protect what we have or just when we feel like it?

Principles before personalities is the glue that makes it all stick cause we are by nature a lot of personalities that were/are sick. But we all get better if we have an atmosphere of recovery.

—David R. Tampa

What's This “Once An Addict, Always An Addict” Business?

Good question. I've always felt this to be an impacting statement. A 38-word paragraph dedicated to a single page precedes the introductory page to our Basic Text.

I have a Fourth, Fifth and a Sixth Edition of the Basic Text in my home. I noticed that the paragraph has moved from Roman Numeral page IVX in editions 4 and 5 to Roman Numeral page XXIV in the Sixth Edition. You're probably saying to yourself, “what's your point”? There is no real point here other than I'm a little more observant as I continue to age.

I digress..., back to the statement.

The first leg of the statement makes it clear to me that, “in and of myself” I cannot do a thing to dis-

count the **nature** of my being. Every fiber of my existence is “done up in excess”! It has always been **natural** for me to pursue with reckless abandon, the delights of pleasure while taking every measure to evade and avoid those elements of life I perceive to be painful.

The second part of the sentence makes it clear to me that there is a means of combating my **nature**, of overcoming my design and the formula. This is through “the application of the spiritual principles” within the Twelve Steps of the fellowship known as **Narcotics Anonymous**, available to any and all who seek it.

Probably most important component of this statement is found in the 3-letter word “God” in the 3rd and final sentence in this statement.

I know—I know, the side by side two-word sentence that is the bane of the active or still struggling addict can eventually give way to the concept of “coming to believe.” For me, the twinkling concept of a God of my understanding was brought about solely through and at the hands of a self-inflicted bludgeoning that no other human or group of humans could have put upon me.

Some will say, K., there is no need to complexify the simplicity of the statement you long-winded practitioner of ruse and babble—and they're probably right but don't forget now, you posed the question and we're talking about **my nature** here. Yes, I realize that complexify is not a word (unless you live in my world) but like my dear friend R. B. says, so long as I

get my meaning across, so be it!

If we were to step back and simplify, the statement could be condensed and interpreted with: I can't, he can, I believe at least for the moment I'm *gonna* let him in and try something new.

To answer your question succinctly, although I have the disease of addiction, I need not suffer, insufferably at the hands of it. We can, and I have become with the help of a lot of loving people a contributing, productive member of society. **The lie is dead!!!**

Initially the statement describes my **nature** but more importantly, it provides a daily antidote for the condition my condition is in.

—Anonymous

Anniversaries

January & February

A New Way

Dannielle A. 1/5/2007

Breakfast Club

Angel G. 2/15/2009

Daily Recovery

Barbara P. 2/7/2006
Jackie C. 2/2/2007
Jackie C. 1/2/2007
John P. 1/5/2008
Lovett H. 1/21/1988
Rhonda M. 2/6/1993
Robert B. 2/12/2005
Willie W. 1/2/2010
Witt J. 1/10/2011

Emergency Room

Alex S. 2/14/2007
Marilyn R. 1/2/2010

Fresh Start Group

Cynthia S. 1/11/2009

High Lie

Abby W. 1/16/2005
Cassie H. 1/1/2001
Mike C. 1/6/2002
Steve M. 2/19/2001

Hope In Recovery

Robert B. 2/12/2005

Hyde Park NA

Chris K. 2/18/2003
Judy O. 2/5/1998
Lisa C. 1/9/2010
Maggie R. 2/6/1988

Keep The Faith I & II

Robert Y. 2/1/1998

Live or Die

Linda H. 2/10/2003

Monday Meditation

Kandi O. 1/13/2007

More Hope

Louis W. 1/28/1998

More Will Be Revealed

Jeremy M. 1/24/2009

NA 180

David V. 1/11/2010
Shawn S. 2/17/2005

NA Speaker Meeting

Kim L. 2/9/2003
Melinda 1/30/2009

New Bite Of Serenity

Charlie D. 1/15/2006
Liz W. 1/10/2000

New Life

Carlton W. 2/12/1999
John P. 1/5/1998
Marilyn R. 1/20/2010
Pam S. 2/5/2011
Sara M. 2/22/1994
Todd F. 2/5/2011

New Tampa NA

Steve D. 2/18/2006

Newbite Of Serenity

Aaron G. 2/10/2008
Melissa J. 2/22/2005
Oscar H. 2/5/2005
Yolanda P. 2/17/1993

Old-Timers

Alicia E. 2/5/1996
Kim R. 2/4/2009
Pat S. 2/6/1996

Our Primary Purpose (OPP)

Ann P. 1/23/2002
Jeremy M. 1/24/2009
Lamont J. 2/19/2009
Pat S. 2/6/1996

Parrot Pirates In Paradise Group Of NA

Ken T. 1/3/1988

Radical Recovery

Martin P. 1/20/1987

Recovery In Riverview

Sharon M. 2/28/2009

Rise For Recovery

Chanta S. 2/2/2010
Chrissy R. 2/13/2010
Joanne D. 1/11/2010
Vivian M. 2/21/1998

Saturday Night Live

Brenda C. 2/28/2006

Squeaky Clean

Vern 1/12/2007

Stepping Up

Brenda B. 2/24/2005
George J. 1/20/1992
Marilyn R. 1/20/2010

Sunday Serenity

Kent C. 1/26/2009

The Sanctuary

Sergio L. 2/6/2010

The Ties That Bind Us

John G. 1/3/2010

The War Is Over

Aris 1/7/1987
Baxter C. 2/12/2004
Brian M. 2/4/2007
Josh M. 2/17/2005
Kandi O. 1/13/2007
Lou 2/15/2005
Nancy M. 1/24/2010
Tiney R. 2/5/2008
Vicki M. 2/12/1999

The Women's Recovery Room

Alicia E. 2/5/1996
Jennifer F. 2/14/2010
Karen S. 2/2/2011
Vicki M. 2/12/1999

Together We Can

Jay S. 1/30/2003
Triple M

Luther R. 1/15/1989

TTNA

Jerry R. 2/17/1996

Unknown Group

Amber F. 1/17/2007
Barbara P. 2/7/2006
Jerry R. 2/17/1996
Kim L. 2/9/2003
Lauron H. 2/22/2009
Marissa K. 1/12/2010
Robert B. 2/12/2005

Uptown NA

Caroline C. 2/8/1989

Welcome Home

John W. 1/18/2009
John W. 1/7/2008
Oscar H. 2/5/2005

Women Do Recover

Brenda O. 2/10/2009
Cherelle T. 1/22/1998
Chrissy R. 2/13/2010
Kim G. 2/4/2009
Kim G. 2/4/2009

Women Of Freedom

Naomi S. 2/26/1992
Pat S. 2/6/1996
Sheila S. 2/15/2007

Women Of Serenity

Abbie 2/14/2010
Alicia E. 2/5/1996
Delphine D. 1/31/2010
Jeenifer 2/14/2010

Women Stand United

Chanta S. 2/6/2009

Women's Hope

Cory B. 1/30/2010
Dasy R. 2/13/1997
Jen A. 1/27/2008
Misty L. 2/5/2010
Sandy M. 1/29/2008

Anonymity from p 1—
the rooms. My concern is that some people who might want to join NA won't because of their fear of being "outed".

"The only control we have is to honor the Tradition 12

and what is learned about Anonymity in our groups. As for those of you who are fine with sharing your identity, great... more power to you. Lastly, those of us who still want our identity kept secret... please respect it;

honor it with love and compassion and not judgment. We are all in this together! What type of Anonymity do you practice? Do you respect others who do not want to be known in a 12 Step Program?" (quoted from another

person in recovery who wishes to stay anonymous).

What I do know is that what I share with my Higher Power is always Anonymous! —Anonymously in the rooms

Poetry & Thought

The Sounds of Silence

Can you hear me in the sounds of silence?

*A place where time stands still where eyes are filled
with tears*

... Waterfalls

Flowing endlessly forming puddles of suffering

Crying out from deep within me

... My Innocence

*Silent Screams of unyielding pain yearning to break
free from shame*

*An Empty Abode filled with memories of an essence
stolen*

Locked away within the sounds of silence

A quiet noisy place where all is non- exist

Where unknown fears manifest

... lurking in the dark

Where dreams are shattered and intimacies lost

Searching while retreating

Crying out from deep within me

... My innocence

Seeking a place of solace

Silent Screams of unyielding pain

Yearning to break free

Drowning in this waterfall which is my rain

Hiding within the Sounds of my Silence

Then I share my pain with you

The therapeutic value

Unparalleled...

Breaking The Sounds of Silence...

—Penny C.

Friends?

***When I'm feeling alone in room full of
people or
thinking I've found true friends-just to
get
disappointed. These are the times I
wonder why.***

They say to stick with the winners!

But who are they?

***I feel I should be cautious trying to
find them or I may lose
a part of myself.***

***I cannot afford to sacrifice my ethics
or my integrity.***

***I will not give in and respond to those
people who
call themselves winners-when in reality
they are not.***

***I will be aware of those wolves who
wear sheep's
clothing. I will be wary of who I select
for my inner
circle of friends. I have no choice
because my recovery
and my life depend on it!***

—Cynthia P.

Happy Valentine's Day!



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