



## Before Twelve

**T**he 12th Step for many of us will often seem like some journey we've undertaken in some distant past. I recently had to expound on this step and, as typical, a word or words I've heard frequently suddenly leaps off the page. It was, to quote a once famous line from a television movie, "Grits, dummy! Grits!"

What jumped out first about this last step was the fact 3 there are clauses to this step: 1. We've had a spiritual awakening, 2. We carry this message to addicts (apparently, any addict), and 3. We practice these principles in everyday living.

Secondly, it was the word "had". Had is past tense—my spiritual awakening(s) have already occurred.

## InSide

**Not Pretty Nor Pink**

**Experience Strength & Hopes**

**Anniversaries**

I've always assumed, but not quite adhered to, spiritual awakenings officially occurred on the 12th Step. Our text (*It Works How And Why*, 2nd paragraph) makes clear this is wrong, "While there may be great variations within our experience about this awakening of the spirit, we all agree that it results from working the steps. Our awakening has been progressive, beginning with a spark of awareness in the First Step."

Wow! No need to wait for a thunderous voice in sky telling me I have arrived. Instead, it's been that "...each step has contributed to the extraordinary transformation which we know as a spiritually awakening." Our text goes on to say that when we surrender in our taking on our first step, we were beginning our spiritual awakening. It continues in this manner outlining these awakenings. For me, these awakenings were as follows:

The experience of humility in Step Two. I find the word intriguing. Humility is defined as "the quality or condition of being humble; modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc."

In Step Three, I become empowered. I confess that I'm a bit averse by those members who —*Cont'd. p. 4*

## Our Public Image

*"When you're working with adolescents, it's even more difficult, because I may say, I may be thinking emotionally I think this adolescent will really connect with this particular meeting, but this particular meeting is also pretty well-known for its predatory males, and so I won't send a young woman to that meeting."*

—Treatment Program  
Counselor

**N**A's public image is often directly dependent on the strength and stability of our fellowship's infrastructure. When we conducted the Public Relations Roundtable meetings with professionals who interface with our fellowship, their concerns sounded familiar:

- \* confusion about which NA phone number to call in a large city (and no one available to answer the phone once a number has been found),

- \* a lack of confidence in the safety and recovery available at NA meetings

(that is, predatory behavior at meetings is a direct reflection upon NA's image to the public),

- \* NA being overwhelmed by potential members sent from drug courts,

- \* lack of identification in some meetings by target populations—youth, prescription drug addicts, professionals, etc.,

- \* not seeing NA as stable or reliable, and

- \* a lack of awareness of the existence of various NA literature or periodicals.

These are only examples of how professionals see us and don't even include the



difficulty most of us face with NA's public image when trying to find a meeting facility or start a new H&I panel. Whether it's a professional considering sending an addict to one of our meetings or a high school administrator taking a chance with a presenta- —*Cont'd. p. 2*

# Not Pretty Nor Pink

**T**here's this elephant in the room. It's in my room.

It was once a house with different rooms—places to go. But not anymore—that beast took care of that. It grew very quickly.

No. It isn't pink, either. They're never as cute as popular culture would have you believe. It's huge, ugly, and dingy grey. Its scabby and strange skin smells. At one time, my friends and I did think it entertaining when it was a babe. We thought the tricks it once did was fun, and now, the few it may reluctantly do, are not worth cost

to feed it. *How does it eat?* I have nothing left. I no longer have friends, and now, it treats me as the simple-minded pet. I am hungry, yet, it continues to grow. Oh man, there *is* an elephant in my room! It did grow very quickly.

He seems slow but plods along swiftly; smashing and knocking over everything in my room. I can't keep any-

thing and my family refuses to visit. I understand. Besides, they cannot get inside my room. The elephant blocks

the door. Besides, there no place for them with the elephant in my room. I can't get out; I'm alone with myself.

Of course—there's the elephant in my room—I'm still alone. It grew so quickly.

I'm going to have to tear down that wall—get outside my little room. *Is that green grass in the yard?* I'll find myself a different place. I'll do something different—get a small pet—maybe a cat.

—Terence B.



# My Experience Strength and Hopes

*Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the January & February 2010 issue of the Clean Times.*

**M**y experience is that I relapsed from my abstinence within my first 28 days in the program. I attended meetings, but I did not use Steps to help me, nor did I have a Sponsor, so I made a decision to use. I returned after two days and picked up a white key tag. This was very emotional! I felt bad that I had used, but I was reassured by the NA Fellowship that my decision to try again was the right one. I just had to try not to use and to keep coming back. I felt embarrassed. But, I had been feeling embarrassed and bad about myself for so

long. This time, at least, I was again trying not to use.

Since then, I only knew that using was not a solution. It would always cause me pain and create problems in my life. From that day on, I have been clean by following the suggestions of the Program and now I have four and a half years clean. Thank God!

My strength is that, after this time, I found a renewed hope from other addicts that I really could stay clean. I started working the Steps and doing service at the meetings. I developed a network of other addicts and I didn't use no matter what was happening in my life, or how I felt. I stayed clean on a day to day basis and still do today.

My hope is that everyday I do a few things to work on my recovery. I keep hoping that this will allow me freedom from active addiction. I focus today on what I can do to stay clean. I keep working Steps and soon will work the 12 Traditions. I hope that I can stay clean by doing the work, praying, and always keeping the hope alive inside of me that I found in the rooms of NA.

If an addict like me can stay clean, then anyone can. We never have to use again because we have hope today and we do recover.

*In loving service, Janice B.*

*Public Image from p 1—*tion to their student body, a positive public image is crucial to our primary purpose. We feel that it is time to begin squarely facing some of the messages we've been putting out to the public. Our relationship with the public is something we cannot avoid. We are not a secret society—we are an effective and viable solution to drug addiction and it's time we consistently behave that way. The first step is being honest about the challenges we face in our own local communities, which is the place where practical solutions can arise. As our literature says, "if a solution isn't practical then it isn't spiritual."

*Issue Discussion Topic  
Session Profile*

*Editor's Note: <http://www.na.org/?ID=publicimage>*

# Anniversaries July & August

## 12 Step Sisters

Anna M. 7/20/2005 7 yr  
Doreen B. 7/28/1989 23 yr  
Sandy G. 8/14/2006 6 yr

## A New Way

Gary M. 7/3/2008 4 yr  
Ross L. 8/28/2008 4 yr

## Addict Salvation

Harvey P. 7/4/2008 4 yr  
Rose J. 8/27/2007 5 yr

## Brandon At Noon

Anthony D. 7/4/2010 2 yr  
Barron 8/18/2008 4 yr  
Claude H. 7/6/2008 4 yr  
Heather 8/16/2010 2 yr  
Jean B. 8/27/2010 2 yr  
Tina 8/19/2010 2 yr

## Breakfast Club

Billy K. 7/18/2008 4 yr  
Doug C. 7/27/2011 1 yr  
Jeffery W. 8/5/2009 3 yr  
Belynda N. 7/4/2000 12 yr  
Emily C. 8/22/2010 2 yr

## Daily Recovery

Beth P. 8/3/2007 5 yr  
Billy E. 8/19/2009 3 yr  
Janice B. 7/7/2005 7 yr  
Lisa J. 7/1/2007 5 yr  
Melissa M. 7/11/2009 3 yr

## Emergency Room

Chris M. 7/18/2010 2 yr  
Danny Y. 7/9/2010 2 yr  
Ronald F. 7/15/2000 12 yr

## Grow Or Go

Andrew L. 8/27/2002 10 yr  
Bruce M. 7/19/1986 26 yr  
David F. 8/18/2006 6 yr  
Garrett B. 8/3/1990 22 yr  
Hillary M. 8/30/2008 4 yr  
Jessica T. 7/16/2007 5 yr  
Rachel D. 7/10/2008 4 yr  
Stephen M. 8/18/2006 6 yr  
Tara G. 7/4/2006 6 yr

## High Lie

Bryan T. 7/3/2006 6 yr

Charles R. 8/10/2005 7 yr  
Clay W. 8/28/2003 9 yr  
Craig C. 7/23/2003 9 yr  
Jackie M. 7/10/2010 2 yr  
Jacob H. 8/7/2005 7 yr  
Jason B. 8/8/2005 7 yr  
Jennifer C. 7/18/2006 6 yr  
John Y. 8/8/1988 24 yr  
Julia W. 7/28/2011 1 yr  
Leslie M. 7/4/2005 7 yr  
Mary S. 7/30/2008 4 yr  
Susan S. 7/28/2010 2 yr

## Hope In Lutz

Luke B. 7/8/2010 2 yr  
Robert M. 7/10/2009 3 yr

## Hope In Recovery

Lisa J. 7/1/2007 5 yr

## How It Works

Nikki T. 7/23/2008 4 yr

## Hyde Park NA

Heather B. 8/14/2009 3 yr

## In The Middle

Alley . 7/20/2010 2 yr  
Deborah N. 8/23/2010 2 yr  
Mike G. 7/23/2009 3 yr

## La Ultima Parada

Esther C. 8/30/1998 14 yr

## Live Or Die

Michael J. 8/15/1990 22 yr

## Monday Meditation

Heather Q. 8/16/2010 2 yr  
Josie C. 7/10/2010 2 yr

## More Hope I & II

Alfred M. 8/10/2000 12 yr

## More Will Be Revealed

Tara 8/26/2010 2 yr

## NA 180

Billy K. 7/18/2008 4 yr  
Chad B. 8/2/2010 2 yr  
Channing L. 8/31/2011 1 yr  
Chris M. 7/2/1987 25 yr  
Garrett B. 8/3/1990 22 yr

## NA 180

Katie R. 8/9/2004 8 yr  
Samantha R. 7/8/2009 3 yr  
Spencer 7/6/2004 8 yr  
Tammy T. 8/25/2002 10 yr

## NA Speaker Meeting

Cheryl H. 7/13/2006 6 yr

## NAIL

Eric O. 8/18/1984 28 yr

## New Bite Of Serenity

Ashley M. 7/27/2011 1 yr  
Carol G. 8/5/2009 3 yr  
Cassandra H. 8/4/1992 20 yr  
David R. 8/23/2010 2 yr  
Derek B. 8/30/2008 4 yr  
Esther C. 8/30/1998 14 yr  
Jason L. 8/28/2008 4 yr  
Matt W. 7/23/2009 3 yr

## New Life

Pam S. 8/5/2010 2 yr

## New Tampa NA

Adam W. 8/20/2007 5 yr  
Adam W. 7/20/2007 5 yr  
Aloha B. 7/5/2005 7 yr  
Carol F. 8/9/1987 25 yr  
Chris C. 8/25/2007 5 yr  
Jason L. 8/7/2007 5 yr  
Krissy J. 8/3/2008 4 yr

## Old-Timers

Anthony R. 8/10/2009 3 yr  
Lisa E. 8/2/1996 16 yr  
Milli O. 8/26/1988 24 yr  
Millie D. 8/26/1998 14 yr

## Our Primary Purpose

Enrique 8/13/1999 13 yr  
Michele P. 7/21/2003 9 yr  
Michelle M. 7/21/2003 9 yr

## Quest For Serenity

Carmela H. 7/19/2007 5 yr  
Cheryl H. 7/13/2006 6 yr  
Dan N. 7/29/2011 1 yr  
Eric F. 8/15/1998 14 yr  
Jessica G. 8/1/2006 6 yr  
John G. 8/10/2009 3 yr  
Katie R. 8/9/2004 8 yr

Nicole J. 7/1/2009 3 yr  
RC H. 8/4/2002 10 yr  
Spencer B. 7/6/2004 8 yr

## Radical Recovery

Carl C. 7/17/1994 18 yr  
Derrick S. 7/13/1988 24 yr  
Patricia P. 7/9/2010 2 yr  
Rick B. 7/7/2008 4 yr

## Recovery Central

Alejandro A. 8/22/2000 12 yr  
Amanda M. 7/5/2008 4 yr  
Frank M. 7/20/2008 4 yr

## Recovery In Riverview

Cheryl C. 8/10/1990 22 yr  
Estelle S. 7/1/2009 3 yr

## Renegade Recovery

Charles T. 8/5/2003 9 yr  
Chris M. 7/2/1987 25 yr  
Danny Y. 8/9/2010 2 yr  
Enrique R. 8/8/1999 13 yr  
Pat W. 8/26/2010 2 yr

## Rise For Recovery

David M. 7/5/2011 1 yr

## Saturday Night Live

George B. 7/5/1997 15 yr

## Squeaky Clean

Dave C. 7/27/2000 12 yr  
Eric J. 7/10/1974 38 yr  
Mark A. 7/16/2006 6 yr  
Tom C. 7/26/1986 26 yr

## Stepping Up

Larry W. 7/13/1992 20 yr  
Mildred M. 7/8/2007 5 yr  
Valerie A. 7/2/2000 12 yr

## Sunset At Sunrise

Bruce . 8/23/2010 2 yr  
Julie S. 7/10/1993 19 yr  
Justin 8/23/2010 2 yr

## Sunset Solutions

Marnie H. 8/15/1990 22 yr

## The Message

Doug C. 7/27/2011 1 yr  
Spencer 7/6/2004 8 yr

*Continued Last Page*

<b>The Sanctuary</b>			<b>The Women's Recovery Room</b>			<b>Mike H.</b> 7/6/2010 2 yr			<b>Anna M.</b> 7/20/2005 7 yr		
<b>George B.</b> 7/5/1997 15 yr			<b>Siran G.</b> 8/24/2009 3 yr			<b>Rick B.</b> 7/7/2008 4 yr			<b>Jill B.</b> 8/14/2010 2 yr		
<b>The Ties That Bind Us</b>			<b>Together We Can</b>			<b>Uptown Tue &amp; Fri</b>			<b>Nancy W.</b> 7/13/2005 7 yr		
<b>Michael L.</b> 8/11/2007 5 yr			<b>Marie R.</b> 7/18/1989 23 yr			<b>Augie G.</b> 7/4/1996 16 yr			<b>Nancy W.</b> 7/13/2003 9 yr		
<b>Ricky</b> 8/14/2010 2 yr			<b>Vivan M.</b> 8/24/2003 9 yr			<b>Chris D.</b> 7/10/2002 10 yr			<b>Patti C.</b> 7/28/2003 9 yr		
<b>The War Is Over</b>			<b>Triple M</b>			<b>Dave R.</b> 7/11/2006 6 yr			<b>Sandy O.</b> 8/14/2006 6 yr		
<b>Anthony D.</b> 7/4/2010 2 yr			<b>Joe B.</b> 7/26/1988 24 yr			<b>Janice B.</b> 7/7/2005 7 yr			<b>Sandy G.</b> 8/4/2006 6 yr		
<b>Brian M.</b> 7/17/2007 5 yr			<b>Reggie A.</b> 8/22/1998 14 yr			<b>Marie A.</b> 7/16/2006 6 yr			<b>Shannon H.</b> 8/24/2008 4 yr		
<b>Claude H.</b> 7/6/2008 4 yr			<b>TTNA</b>			<b>Welcome Home</b>			<b>Tammy T.</b> 8/25/2002 10 yr		
<b>Crystal H.</b> 7/1/2010 2 yr			<b>Bob M.</b> 7/6/1987 25 yr			<b>Casey R.</b> 7/18/2010 2 yr			<b>Women's Perspective</b>		
<b>Dave L.</b> 8/13/2005 7 yr			<b>Dave L.</b> 8/13/2005 7 yr			<b>George R.</b> 7/16/1998 14 yr			<b>Emily C.</b> 8/22/2010 2 yr		
<b>Eddie C.</b> 7/28/2007 5 yr			<b>Unknown Group</b>			<b>Women Do Recover</b>			<b>Josie C.</b> 7/10/2010 2 yr		
<b>Jay T.</b> 7/16/2007 5 yr			<b>Anthony D.</b> 7/4/2010 2 yr			<b>Elvieta K.</b> 8/2/2007 5 yr			<b>Corrections:</b>		
<b>Jeff R.</b> 8/5/2005 7 yr			<b>Billie E.</b> 7/23/2010 2 yr			<b>Valarie A.</b> 7/2/2000 12 yr			<b>Hope In Recovery</b>		
<b>Jenna B.</b> 7/8/2010 2 yr			<b>Bob M.</b> 7/6/1987 25 yr			<b>Women Of Freedom</b>			<b>Tom K.</b> 05/01/2006 6 yr		
<b>John M.</b> 8/13/1984 28 yr			<b>Derick S.</b> 7/13/1989 23 yr			<b>Lucinda R.</b> 8/19/2007 5 yr			<b>Emergency Room</b>		
<b>Josie C.</b> 7/10/2010 2 yr			<b>Lucas C.</b> 7/17/2010 2 yr			<b>Women's Hope</b>			<b>John P.</b> 05/10/2006 6 yr		
<b>Kenny A.</b> 8/9/2006 6 yr						<b>Aloha B.</b> 7/5/2005 7 yr					
<b>Mike D.</b> 7/8/2010 2 yr											
<b>Russell G.</b> 7/10/2003 9 yr											

*Before Twelve from p 1*—constantly say how powerless they and/or myself are—especially over places and things.

Step Four requires courage. It was for me, too, a "...dreaded [...] process of self-appraisal...", yet, "our spirits were strengthen by our emerging integrity."

Trust and some more humility is needed and given in Step Five: We begin to understand that humility and self-loathing are incompatible and can't exist at the same time."

Then there's more of that humility in Step Six with pinches of trust and faith thrown in for good measure. "Trust and faith, two important elements of a spiritual awakening..."

In the next Step we begin to experience freedom. This new found freedom is not

hampered in our shortcomings—our character flaws. "Consciously asking the God of our understanding to help us in Step Seven was an important development in the awakening of our spirit. That request was tangible evidence of how much we had changed spiritually."

In our Eight Step and having been relieved from compulsively acting on our shortcoming, we are spiritually prepared with additional courage for the next Step because a dishonest amendment is impossible, "We developed the ability to feel empathy for others." This growing empathy is especially true for those we have harmed.

What can one say about the Ninth Step? It's plain and straight forward. It can be scary. But we've been practicing humility and have

been given doses of courage with each previous Step. Our text tells us that completing this Step allows us to live in the present.

It's maintenance time. Now we practice adherence to our newfound values in Step Ten, "thereby strengthening their importance in our lives." It is now that we fully come to believe that we have changed our lives for the better. We have developed and actively engage our relationship with a loving Higher Power. We are no longer as self-centered as we once we were—"Narcotics Anonymous is not selfish program."

Arriving here on Step Eleven, we find that we must now vigorously continue to maintain our relationship with God. I find God to be loving and caring. If He is to me, then He is that to others—"The spiritual void we felt at

the beginning of our recovery has been filled with gratitude, unconditional love, and a desire to be of service to God and others. Undenably, we have experienced a spiritual awakening."

Finally, the last Step, but not the end of our walk in this new way of life we call recovery. We continue to practice the principles we've gained and we keep it by carrying this wonderful message to addicts. "Helping others is perhaps the highest aspiration of the human heart and something we have been entrusted with as a result of a Higher Power working in our lives."

"Spirituality becomes a way of life for us as we live by the principles of recovery." Wow! Thank you God, and thank you NA.

—Terence B.

The Tampa Funcoast Area of Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter Committee welcomes your comments, ideas, announcements, and articles. Your submissions must adhere to the spiritual principles of The 12 Traditions of NA and cannot be copyrighted material from 3rd party persons or publications. Submissions may be subject to editing in order to adhere to the spiritual principles of The 12 Traditions of NA and/or the space constraints or the group's conscience of the Clean Times Newsletter Committee. Your submission might be reprinted or quoted in other NA newsletters and/or related media throughout the NA Fellowship worldwide. Submissions are of the opinions of the author and not necessarily those of the Tampa Funcoast Area Of NA or Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.