



## The Meeting Place Makes It

*During 2012, our area said goodbye to some icons. We celebrated the passing of those who went on to receive their Eternity Medallion and mourned those who passed away in active addiction.*

*Doors that had been opened to NA for decades closed and members were faced with finding new home groups.*

*Despite the changes, the Funcoast kept it moving. We sought out new venues for meetings and events and new doors opened. We got one more day clean.*

*One of the many places to remain was The Meeting Place. The Meeting Place has survived the rats, the toilet not working, and the 13th stepping that happens. It was where this writer got clean. I slept on the floors and the outdoor steps my first few*

*nights. I met other newcomers while there who have become lifelong friends. One best friend even moved into the building and will soon celebrate 3 years clean.*

*Man, I remember the early days there. No job, no money and I could not sleep. The Emergency Room meeting was a safe haven for me. It*

*was there I could get a fresh cup of coffee and bum a smoke. I made friends; we were all unemployed and broke, but we would scrap together enough money for dinner at the Village Inn. Our laughter bonded us for life. As the drug-induced fog lifted, I began to look for work and I would take my lunch breaks at the noon meeting. The Meeting Place was easily accessible via public transportation and*

*after the meeting I could quickly return to my job search.*

*The rats, its location on Nebraska Avenue, and the often non-working toilet made The Meeting Place less intimidating for me. It was right there on the front line; in the trenches. Often, active addicts would nod out during the meetings or prostitutes would come in to take a break and hear the message; a message that was and*



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**T**raditions

My name is Bruce G. and I am an addict. I was told something in early recovery. If it is good for NA, then it will be good for me. After reading the Traditions in the basic text, I had this thought, "If I am going to be a part of NA, I just might want to know what I belong to." Later I realized that if these traditions had allowed NA to stand as strong for as long as it has and grow to the point of what we now know, that just maybe, "It also could work for me and in my life." I've always been drawn back to the traditions wanting to know, understand, and learn how to apply them to my life in dealing with others.

Although I have worked all 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, I don't want this to be a Green and Gold review—just my experience, strength, and hope from reading, writing and the application of our program with some of our traditions and slide in a step to back it up.

Our 1st Tradition says that our common welfare should come first. Very simply put, if my common welfare does not come first, I will be no good to help others. My personal recovery and the unity I have with myself and the God of my understanding allows me

to be part of the unity of the group, my family, and my work.

The loving God that lives in our 2nd Tradition and in my heart does have the ultimate authority of all things. It is amazing to see how my life unfolds when I invite my loving God into anything I have going on. At that point I have gotten out of myself will and allowed God's will to take place in applied faith. This for me stops the insanity and allows me to be restored to sanity, which we talk about in our 2nd Step.

The passion I have learned from our 3rd Tradition is so simple. If I don't have a desire to do something, I just will not do it. In all of my relationships, if we did not have that desire to be in that relationship, I have the evidence that it did not work out. It is that passion it takes to keep that fire burning to remain in the relationship. I can use this compassion and humility in just about everything in my life. Self-Governing is not a concept I ever thought would apply to me or in my life.

With the autonomous in our 4th Tradition I am allowed to be open-minded. I get the right to make some decisions in my life and I know that the more I mature, the better those decisions become. In all my interactions with others we will get to decide

what the dynamics of that relationship will be. If we overstep each other's rights, others will then need to step in and help protect our greater good and our rights as a person.

I know if I am taking care of my responsibilities and doing my job, I am working the 5th Tradition in my life. I have a purpose in life today. Applying integrity, which I believe only the God of my understanding can judge me on, is the proof I get to see. Am I still running around crying out in self-pity or am I giving back what was freely given to me? Harmony being my favorite spiritual principle found throughout our tradition.

In our 6th tradition, it says that money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. Anything I put in front of my recovery I too will lose. Now the 7th tradition is the first one that I said I know what that means to me. I spent a part of my life where I had to have outside contributions, and some of us might have too. The freedom I get to have by doing for me is great. Not having to do something because you might not take care of me or take something from me is so rewarding. This is for sure; if it is good for NA I might want to do it for me. I, as a person, am not a professional as part of this body.

I had to understand in our 8th tradition that I am neither a doctor nor a lawyer but that if I need one I might want to go find one. By being prudent, I am concerned with practical matters of my life.

The 9th tradition allows me to be a part of things that are so much bigger than I. The fidelity it talks about is so cool. I get to be faithful to people, places, and things. Faithful I said. With this I get to build alliances.

The 10th tradition works like a paradox. NA takes the stand of not having an opinion on outside matters. Funny how that works so they don't get caught up in the controversy. On the other hand, I am allowed to have an opinion about anything I choose to. As soon as I voice my opinion, I am opened up to public controversy. Today I just don't need that in my life. This allows me to be who I am, you to be you and us to have unity in doing so.

Because of the 11th Tradition let's just say I am glad I am not a rock star or someone important, but my name is out there for the world to see daily. Today we have the internet and good old FB (FaceBook). My anonymity is mine to keep or mine to break. The cool thing is that just because I support something on my FB page does not mean I belong to it

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# Growing Up With My Daughter: A Single Mom And The Steps

When I began my new life in recovery I was 35, and right around having 90 days cleans, I got pregnant. At 35 I had never changed a diaper or even babysat, I had absolutely no clue what I was getting ready to experience.

As my recovery grew so did my belly. When my daughter was born I had finished Steps 1, 2, and 3 and had 11 months clean. I was comfortable with being honest, open-minded and willing. However, I learned a new level of trust and powerlessness as I watched my daughter through an incubator with tubes all over her body. She was in Neo-Natal ICU for 24 long days and nights. On the 25th day I experienced hope and faith like never before when the doctor said to me, "Ok Mom, are you ready to take your baby home today?" Nervous, scared, yet full of hope and faith I took a leap forward with my daughter and experienced the courage I learned and wrote about in Step 4.

Having my daughter home with about 18 months clean and being a single mom, my commitment to my new way of life required willingness that only came from Step 5. I wasn't just

willing for myself anymore but I became willing to do whatever it takes for her as well. This was a perfect time for me to practice the self-acceptance and perseverance called for in Step 6. This step allowed me to see me on paper and, as a single mom, I appreciated such clarity. I was able to deal with working full-time, keeping my recovery first, putting my daughter's needs before my feelings towards her father, and finding a comfortable, yet crazy, balance with it all.

As my daughter turned a year old and was covered in pink decorations, I prepared to celebrate two years clean. I picked up my first black and gold key tag at The Meeting Place—the very room where my recovery began. As I looked around the room at so many familiar faces that were there to help me, the humility I learned doing Step 7 swelled up in my eyes and suddenly I experienced the practical application of this step. My daughter began walking along beside me as we were both experiencing our new found freedom. Her freedom into exploring her new mobile world and mine being able to hold my head high with honesty, willingness, and compassion from making my 8th Step list. As I began to learn the meaning of forgiveness, and its many forms in Step 9, my

daughter began talking. As she found her voice, I found mine also. She was saying things like, "pretty", "wow", and "pizza" and in finding my own voice I was saying things like, "I'm sorry", "I'm changing my behaviors and actions", and "Thank you for your forgiveness".

My daughter just turned two and I am getting ready to celebrate three years clean. She is running everywhere, into everything, and is so full of life. As any active two year old she requires guidance and structure. I have been able to find self-discipline and integrity by working Step 10 which has allowed me to give her that guidance and structure. I am getting ready to start working Step 11 and my daughter is getting ready to start pre-school. In many ways we really are growing up together. NA has shown me how to have a life beyond any of my wildest dreams for which I am eternally grateful. Through being so very blessed with this new way of life I am able to provide and teach my daughter how her life can be just as amazing beyond any of her own dreams. Thank You Narcotics Anonymous for the Steps, the fellowship and for showing me how to grow up along with my daughter.

—Jennifer F.



## *Traditions from p. 2*

The things I am able to do in service for our fellowship, gives me faith that the attraction (rather than promotion), will work for others as it did for me.

The anonymity it talks about in our 12th Tradition is beautiful. We can do all things for the greater good. It is not about me anymore. It is about the sick and suffering addict, the non-addict, or the they-have-yet-to-know addict. If I can just put my stuff to the side for a minute and be there for another human being, I too can make a difference in this world. None of us will make it out alive—that is the bottom line. It is no longer about ME ....it is about what WE can do. I want to thank all those that have ever taken a minute out of their lives to carry a message of hope. I believe- TIME is the most important thing I can give or take from someone. Thanks for my recovery.

—Bruce G. 5/21/08

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# My Commercial Thanksgiving

At 38 years old I was adopted into my family. I was invited by my family to vacation in the Georgia Mountains to celebrate Thanksgiving. During this week-long getaway, I awoke to the pitter patter of my nephews playing with Nana and MeMe. As I lay in bed the smell of strong coffee brewing mixed with the aroma of fresh apples baking prompted me to arise.

As I sipped my coffee and looked down the mountain I

pondered if there were other family vacation memories to savor. I stretched my mental images to their limit and came to only holidays spent in prison. I do recall the highlights of those times, the Publix commercials. You know, the ones where the table is set with steaming food and the salt shaker is chasing the pepper shaker.

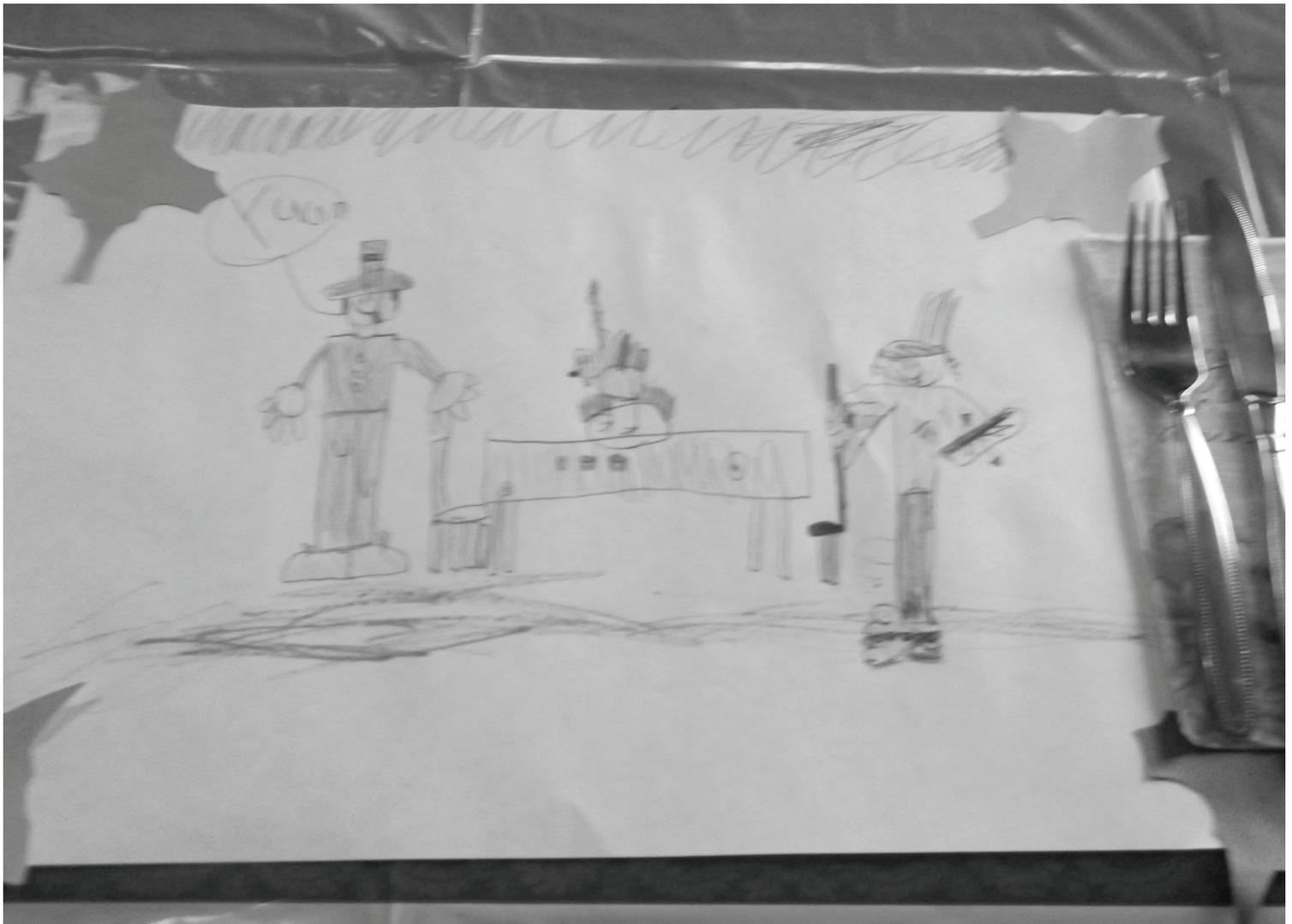
It was in these commercials that I would dare to dream of such times. It was a way

to escape the barb-wired consequences of my choices to a place where I was loved. It was genuinely the bark of count time that would bring me back to my prison.

This Thanksgiving I did not have to pretend. I awoke to the sound of laughter. When I came upstairs my nephew yelled my name ran to me and asked to be held. As he and I wrestled, others were busy in the kitchen preparing the family meal.

As we gathered around the table and held each other's hands, we were asked to say one thing we are grateful for. Mine was family, to have a family.

My Publix Thanksgiving commercial had come true. The only interruption was the shouts and cheers as a family members football team scored. My Higher Power has given this gift to me and He uses the twelve steps to show me how to keep it.



# Anniversaries

# March & April

## 12 Step Sisters

Brandi M 3/31/1991 22  
Diann C 4/5/2003 10  
Cassandra V 4/27/2009 4

## A New Way

Mike H 4/21/2003 10  
Ashley N 4/4/2006 7  
Steve F 4/23/2006 7  
Tammie A 3/11/2002 11

## Addict Salvation

Sheryl K 4/12/1991 22  
Sheryl L 4/12/2008 5  
Denise P 3/10/2009 4  
Francis P 3/10/2009 4  
Teresa J 4/21/2009 4  
Lisa E 4/23/2009 4

## Brandon At Noon

Diana K 4/17/1991 22  
Eric B 4/1/1997 16  
Joe V 4/10/2006 7  
Julie C 4/11/2007 6  
Lee L 3/20/2009 4  
Alysia F 4/11/2009 4  
Phil A 4/13/2009 4  
Asley 4/18/2009 4  
Nicole C 4/28/2009 4  
Sandra G 3/27/2010 3  
Diana W 4/12/2010 3  
Kandy S 4/21/2010 3  
Jerry 3/9/2011 2  
April C 4/8/2011 2

## Breakfast Club

Chris M 3/7/2012 1  
Kenna L 3/26/2011 2

## Choices

Jennifer D 3/29/2012 1  
Jessica P 3/17/2012 1  
Shanna B 3/7/2010 3

## Daily Recovery

Tony F 3/5/2005 8  
Lauca 3/7/2005 8  
Tony F 3/29/2008 5  
Kim C 3/3/2009 4  
Casey C 3/3/2009 4  
Carmelita E 3/4/2009 4  
Tommy B 3/6/2010 3  
Jim L 3/12/2011 2

Kelvin L 3/29/2011 2  
Bertha W 3/27/2012 1

## Free To Be Me

Stan M 3/29/1989 24  
Meredith D 3/15/1991 22  
Victor C 3/21/1998 15  
Michael 4/2/2002 11  
Tim C 3/28/2010 3  
Jared M 3/18/2011 2  
Meredith B 4/2/2011 2  
John M 4/28/2011 2  
Shauna G 3/1/2012 1

## Freedom From Pain

Mark F 4/27/1984 29  
Julie C 4/7/2007 6  
Glenda G 4/8/2008 5  
Tonya K 4/16/2008 5  
Megan L 3/18/2009 4  
Amy M 3/13/2010 3  
Neil D 4/19/2011 2

## Fresh Start Group

Anne D 3/28/2007 6

## Grow Or Go

Laura E 3/7/2005 8  
Sandra S 3/23/2012 1  
Tara B 2/25/2002 11

## Happy Hour

Vivian H 3/17/2006 7  
Vicki P 2/28/2012 1  
Noah S 1/14/2005 8

## High Hopes

Donald D 3/1/1998 15

## High Lie

Amy A 3/8/2006 7  
Bud F 3/7/2010 3  
Sylvia M 3/20/2006 7

## Hope In Lutz

Sam A 4/4/2006 7  
Tom M 4/20/2012 1

## How It Works

Ninnah R 4/6/1990 23

## Life On Life's Terms

Collette B 3/6/2010 3  
Christopher E 3/25/2011 2

## Live Or Die

Vincent S 4/25/2009 4

## Living The Program

April C 4/8/2011 2

## Mondy Meditation

John A 3/16/2011 2

## More Hope I & II

Lamark L 3/24/2010 3  
Nelco C 3/27/2010 3  
Sarah M 3/28/2010 3

## More Will Be Revealed

Jamila H 3/3/2008 5

## NA 180

David R 3/24/1976 37  
Ron H 4/20/2003 10  
Billy K 4/29/2012 1

## NA At The Apex

Danny D 4/28/1992 21  
Adam H 3/28/2011 2  
Jimmy C 4/20/2011 2

## NA At The Door

Barry F 3/15/2000 13

## NA Speaker Meeting

Audrey C 4/9/1994 19

## Never Too Young To Recover

Jesse L 3/12/1993 20  
Maggie G 3/18/2002 11  
Mark W 3/11/2009 4  
Chyrstal B 4/19/2009 4

## New Bite Of Serenity

Nora M 4/5/1999 14  
Julius L 3/30/2000 13  
Tracey J 3/13/2006 7  
Leroy W 3/22/2008 5  
Colin C 3/25/2008 5  
Gretchen B 3/3/2009 4  
Doll P 3/26/2009 4  
Carline M 3/17/2011 2  
Sharon J 3/29/2008 5  
Gwendolyn G 3/29/2003 10

## New Life

Bertha B 4/27/2007 6  
Todd L 4/8/2009 4

Tina V 4/4/2011 2

## New Tampa NA

Brandi M 3/31/1991 22  
Darren F 3/30/2006 7  
Collin C 3/25/2008 5

## Quest For Serenity

Scott D 4/5/1995 18  
Brittany B 4/24/2011 2

## Radical Recovery

Willie M 4/5/1995 18  
Kelvin B 4/8/2008 5  
Debbie E 5/20/2010 3  
Carlos N 5/23/1991 22

## Recovery Central

Bobby R 4/22/2002 11  
Gordon N 4/11/1983 30  
Bobby R 4/22/2002 11  
Jessica S 4/30/2008 5

## Recovery In Riverview

Tonya K 4/16/2008 5

## Recovery On The Northside

Susan F 3/19/1988 25

## Renegade Recovery

Bob E 4/19/1991 22  
Debra I 3/29/2011 2

## Rise For Recovery

Aron R 4/29/2010 3  
Joann D 2/17/2012 1

## Stepping Up

Greg R 4/26/1996 17  
Calvin A 4/11/2010 3  
Cyrus C 3/22/2011 2

## Sunset Solutions

Joe D 3/17/1984 29  
Louis G 4/18/1985 28

## The Clean Perspective

Jenna B 3/15/2011 2

## The Sanctuary

Barry H 3/15/2000 13

## The War Is Over

Victoria L 3/26/2002 11  
Ramenantha E 3/11/2003 10  
Jamie Z 3/3/2005 8

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Tracy K	3/13/2006	7	Manny P	4/18/2006	7	<i>The Meeting Place from p. 1</i> <i>is said in their language, on their turf. This is our primary purpose, "to carry the message to the addict who still suffers". Often whispered is what's wrong with the Meeting Place, yet those very things qualify it! Like me being an addict qualifies me for this program. Where else would I, or countless other newcomers, get clean? We have no car so we need meetings we can get to with public transportation. Not able to sleep and having a 10 pm meeting keeps us off the street. The Meeting place is</i>	<i>where many of us get introduced to NA. The Meeting Place has stood the test of time. It continues to be the place I run to when my ass is on fire, where I get to carry a message to the still suffering addict, and where I or another addict can go during the holidays for a meeting. It reminds me where I've been. I hear "just wait, you will get your turn to bat." I love The Meeting Place and hope to see you there.</i>
Hope L	4/10/2006	7	<b>Women Do Recover</b>				
Joe V	4/10/2006	7	Karon G	3/27/2009	4		
R.J. K	4/27/2007	6	<b>Women Of Freedom</b>				
Amy O	3/13/2009	4	Katie A	4/23/2012	1		
Shauna R	3/7/2010	3	<b>Women Of Serenity</b>				
Angie M	3/9/2010	3	Paula B	4/2/2009	4		
Larry M	3/14/2010	3	Honoree	4/12/2012	1		
Kristina S	3/26/2010	3	<b>Women's Hope</b>				
Grace R	3/25/2011	2	Jodi B	4/19/1986	27		
<b>The Women's Recovery Room</b>			Evelyn V	3/28/1989	24		
Kandy S	4/19/2010	3	Selena M	3/30/1999	14		
<b>Together We Can</b>			Vicki L	3/2/2006	7		
Pat B	3/2/2004	9	Terri E	4/27/2008	5		
Susan M	3/6/2011	2	Torrie E	4/27/2008	5		
<b>Uptown Tue &amp; Fri</b>			Jessica S	4/30/2008	5		
Danny M	4/30/2000	13	Meghan P	3/12/2009	4		
Dennis M	4/30/2002	11	Meredith L	3/27/2009	4		
			Elaine D	4/27/2009	4		

## HOPE

A new me, spiritually free from the  
 burdens of my past,  
 I purge myself of the demons and the  
 lies that bound me,  
 Growing and maturing from the  
 mistakes I've made,  
 I make leaps and bounds in the spirit of  
 today,  
 For this moment is my gift, where I'm  
 relieved of shame or fear, Relishing in  
 the winds of change,  
 My only confirmation is life,  
 Where a new chapter is being written,  
 And though I tread lightly,  
 I embrace the challenge of me.

-Gary M.

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