

Clean Times

May/June 2015

www.tampa-na.org

Takes a day

to sit still

but really he can't take it

You're at the clinic

I just tell you to keep me updated

My phone dies

While I'm picking up antibiotics

I'm pretty sick

It's 5 minutes of dial tone

I lose all credibility as best friend

and there are so many things

we have to forget

to have this conversation

how we're having it

there are so many 'shoulds' we have to
append

to my role

the one I've stayed side-lined with

"Sigh. I cannot count on anyone."

I've gone and let you down

I cannot make up for the past 5
minutes

when you needed me most

just by calling now

soon as

I'm home

I plug in the phone

I'm dialing you

telling you to stay at your appointment

I try to stress the importance

but you needed a scapegoat

... I slip so easy into that coat

now instead of getting picked up by me
afterward

you can go get loaded

calling the edge of the blade

by my name

Saying if only I

if only I picked up

if only I didn't make you wait

I don't argue

I know it's not me you hate.

And it's the saddest thing

when I think I'm close enough to reach
you

that you're finally responding

you tuck all your corners in

and refuse

to open

and it's the saddest thing

I don't mind the eggshells stuck in my
feet

the nerve endings couldn't compete

with

the scene

of your miserable yoke

and how it broke

all your insides

are all on your outsides

laying in the filth

of our history

you refuse to move

so I can sweep

you refuse to let anything or anyone

try to help you

get clean

But

it's only you I'm trying to help, man.

I know I only come when called

but I'm not an enemy for my distance

I'm just bent on keeping myself apart
from the sickness

that's how I've survived

that's how

your shitty best friend

is alive

at

all.

But the love

is not enough

it's not enough

and, in this way, it won't ever be

It has nothing to do with me.

You are a frustrated child to your
feelings

and I cannot solve or redeem you

if you will not settle the fit of your
limbs against mine

if your still in the phase

where you just want to FIGHT

that's alright.

I'll let it be

It's got nothing to do with me.

-Kristan W.

Zombie Girl

I am a girl with a strange and
wicked past, searching the
streets, silent and starving.

When someone stands in my
way, I tear them apart, I feed
on the living.

I am never full; I am always
famished; my eyes burn green
with greed.

I lie, I steal, I cheat, I'm only
me on the inside, but it's my
rotten outsides you see.

This grimace is my mask, it's
not what I am made of; my se-
crets have kept me sick.

I am not dead, but I am hardly
living, I'm stuck in my insanity.

Repeating, repeating, it keeps
getting harder to be me.

This girl engraved with a
shameful face. Addiction is
my disease.

- Jamie P

Inside...

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The difference between...

So this has been something that has been on my mind for a good while, especially since we have had to bury fellow members the last couple of months. My intention is not to come across as uncaring or not empathetic towards our members that choose to go back out. The problem, I have noticed and this is just me and my warped thinking, is that when someone comes back from a relapse a lot of our members display sympathy towards that person. I have a hard time displaying sympathy for anyone that made the choice to go do more research and development, but I do feel empathy for them. What is the difference one might ask? Thanks to the good folks over at Merriam-Webster's.com, we can look at the outside definition of what these words mean. Sympathy means "the feeling that you care about and are sorry about someone else's trouble, grief, misfortune, etc.: a sympathetic feeling" (Merriam-Webster). I have prayed a lot about this, discussed this with old timers, etc. and I have kept coming to the same conclusion. For me, I cannot show sympathy for the chronic relapser or for someone that is first coming in. I feel that it sets myself up for taking on their shit and getting more involved than need be. I am not saying that I do not care about my fellow addicts, I do, I love everyone in our fellowship, I may not exactly like everyone, but I have been taught this over my time in the program. Now looking into the definition of empathy one can find a different approach to the situation. Empathy means "the feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions: the ability to share someone else's feelings". Even though, I am a one white key tag wonder

thus far into my recovery, I still identify with the feelings of shame, remorse, guilt, etc. that we all have felt at some point in our recovery. Practicing empathy towards a fellow addict that is coming back from a relapse or coming in for the first time, allows me to say, "Hey, I've been there and I can relate to what you are going through." It allows me to carry the love to that person and the message that was so freely given to me when I first came into the program of Narcotics Anonymous. After thinking about these words and the definitions for these words, I had to stop and consider why I got clean in the first place. I know, without a shadow of a doubt, there are certain truths that I accept. These truths are: 1. I am powerless over my addiction, that my life had become unmanageable, 2. That I am powerless over others, situations, things, etc. and that I can only control my reaction to them and 3. That there is a power greater than myself out there; that I choose to call God, that is restoring my dumbass to sanity through step work. Simple right? It is and I got clean because the pain in my life had gotten so unbearable that I wanted to die. I had to do it for myself, no one else, but for me. If I had tried to do it for anyone else, I would have been wasting my time. This is something I feel that when I identify with sympathy with another addict, it not only sets myself up for pain, but also that person too. I can be very empathetic when asking someone why they continue to keep their head up their ass, why they choose to keep fighting a losing battle that has extreme consequences, or why they just give this a chance to work. I feel that if we start to be more empathetic towards people coming back or new comers,

saying hey shit is real out there, but let me show you how to stay clean today. Other than, oh I feel so bad that happened to you, maybe one more person can be reached with the message of this awesome program that saved my dumbass.

-Anonymous

Father and Son Clean in the Rooms

I know that when I finally hit bottom there was nowhere left to go except to change. I know I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, burnt out, and having nothing. I knew I had to change. I was about to give up. I could not keep a job; my wife was ready to ship me out. My wife and I started seeing substance abuse counselors. Both counselors told me to try NA meetings. I told them, "Forget it!" Finally, after my third heart attack, my doctor told me I better clean up my act. That is when I said, "I guess I will try these meetings and see if they can help." I went; I listened and nearly got up halfway through the meeting and left. I talked to addicts after and they told me to "keep coming back." I went back, did 90 meetings in 90 days as was suggested to me. I met the one who is my sponsor today and another man who took me to my first NA retreat up in Maine. It was a whole

new awakening. While I was trying to change my ways, so was my son. My son had become addicted to narcotics and had lost a good job. He had to go to detox. It took him a couple of times to kick it. Meetings, every day and night was what he had to do. While we were both getting clean, neither one of us knew the other one was going to NA. It's great to know we can do things and not need to have something that we have to get. My son and his wife have graced me with a wonderful grandson. We both have received our five year medallions in the past year. He got his medallion at Thanksgiving and I received mine on 1/10/2010. He came up from Boston to present me with mine. We go to conventions, speaker jams, and other NA events together. We share smiles from being happy, joyous and free. The whole thing is, we never told each other we got clean till after we did it. I thank God, Higher Power, and the Fellowship of NA for saving this addicts life.

-Addict - NNER

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the March-April 2011 issue of the Tampa Funcoast Clean Times.

The Gift of Giving Back!

There are many reasons for NA members to get involved with service. For me, I wanted to give

back to the program that saved my life. (Full Disclosure: I wanted attention and a position of importance. Giving back came later.) I chose what was then called Public Information. Today we call it Public Relations. We cultivate and nurture relationships within the fellowship and with the general public and the professional community.!

We tell the story of Narcotics Anonymous: "that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live." We tell that story without embellishment and we make no false claims. We focus on our own backyard - the Tampa Funcoast Area - and we place our narrative in the context of an international organization with a multi-lingual and multicultural membership.!

The PR Subcommittee meets at 1 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month at First Church of God, corner of Busch Boulevard and 22nd Street. The Area Service Committee meets an hour later in the same building.!

We publish a monthly meeting schedule, maintain a Web site and provide information about NA to professional organizations and businesses. We have fun. Not the

kind of fun that stays in Vegas, but the fun that comes from being part of a growing organization, hearing the success stories of NA and knowing that the PR Subcommittee played some small role in it.!

There is also - four-letter word alert - work. We have to have people who are willing to do some work. We work to ensure that information about NA is readily available, that the fellowship is well-known and has credibility with the public and professionals. !

The end result is that when an addict has that 50 Shades of Gray moment and just wants the pain to stop, NA is there. Someone, somewhere says "NA can help" and offers a meeting schedule, a phone number or a Web address.!

I'm grateful to be part of this process, knowing that NA will be here for those yet to come. Service work is its own reward. It is the spiritual gift of giving back.

-Daniel W.

Define:

Define good:

is it the should, the would, or the could?

is it what you believe is default understood?

unconscious safety net of your neighborhood...

but then - what if -

What if that belief is but a dream,

or a staged behind-the-scenes

or an ideal out of reach,

standard misconceived

Embraced by a multiple-choice majority.

adoringly, we stare in horror

Scenes of violence and

gore, more

Than what most bargain for

when they turn to channel four,

pore over the decay of the race as they pour their coffee

Exported from the more exploited of place.

But what's more to abhor than the superficial sympathy that lines our

front doors

when we say 'welcome' or good morn

Cutout smiles transplanted on, we trample on the flowers

Wake up & smell the chemicals, throw away the crumpled hours

make up the lies that define us, shiny masks, electronic power

white collars, white powder, silver tongues & silver dollars

24-karat blood, copper-coated fear, all her

Friends withering from lack of daylight - again & again,

Pneumatic means justified by ephemeral ends.

Define bad:

Writing Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)

Our vision is to carry the message that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life.

The Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous has now helped introduce 23 self-sufficient NA meetings in FL and beyond; including, Coleman Federal Penn, Alabama, NW FL, Georgia, and South Carolina. The process began 6 years ago with the 'Pen Pal' project and developed into free-standing meetings; for inmates and by inmates. Many of these men and women are eager to work the steps and become involved in Narcotics Anonymous prior to release. The Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous is working to realize our primary purpose by further implementing the "Writing Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)" initiative.

How can I help? Join the "Writing The Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)" project. This can be your next step in further carrying the message. Through "Writing The Steps for Recovery (Behind the Walls)", you have another opportunity to share your experience, strength, and hope; give back to an addict seeking recovery what NA has given to you.

If you are interested in gaining a State or Federal clearance or for more information and guidelines on the program, contact Gilbert O. at 813.245.5399.

The 7th Men's Spiritual Retreat

3.6.15

started with registration then food and fellowship. Opened with a meet-and-greet meeting by introducing ourselves and sharing what we expected from the retreat. Some of us had no expectations at the time.

Later we had a bonfire meeting and it was a little chilly but the Opening Speaker warmed us up with a great message, which set the pace of the retreat.

3.7.15

Prayer Garden meeting in the morning followed with breakfast and then another speaker with a message and that raised the bar.

Down time; canoeing, step working, and a corn-hole competition.

Lunch came and went so fast; some left for BBQ and others stayed and played cards.

We were blessed to have a visitor come with 30 plus years clean, a "Fossil", who shared on a topic we all know so well... RELATIONSHIPS. Again, the bar was raised.

Now it's time for dinner, where the time go, I know from previous retreats that on Saturday night oven fried chicken is on the menu. I love chicken. Someone told me the only way he doesn't like chicken is alive. There were mashed potatoes, broccoli, gravy, rolls, sweet tea... belly full.

Now it is time for a member that has attended every retreat, a true warrior, a man that believes in NA and loves service to share his experience. With a message of hope, he nailed it short and sweet and to the point. There were a lot of comments and thank you's for sharing.

3.8.15

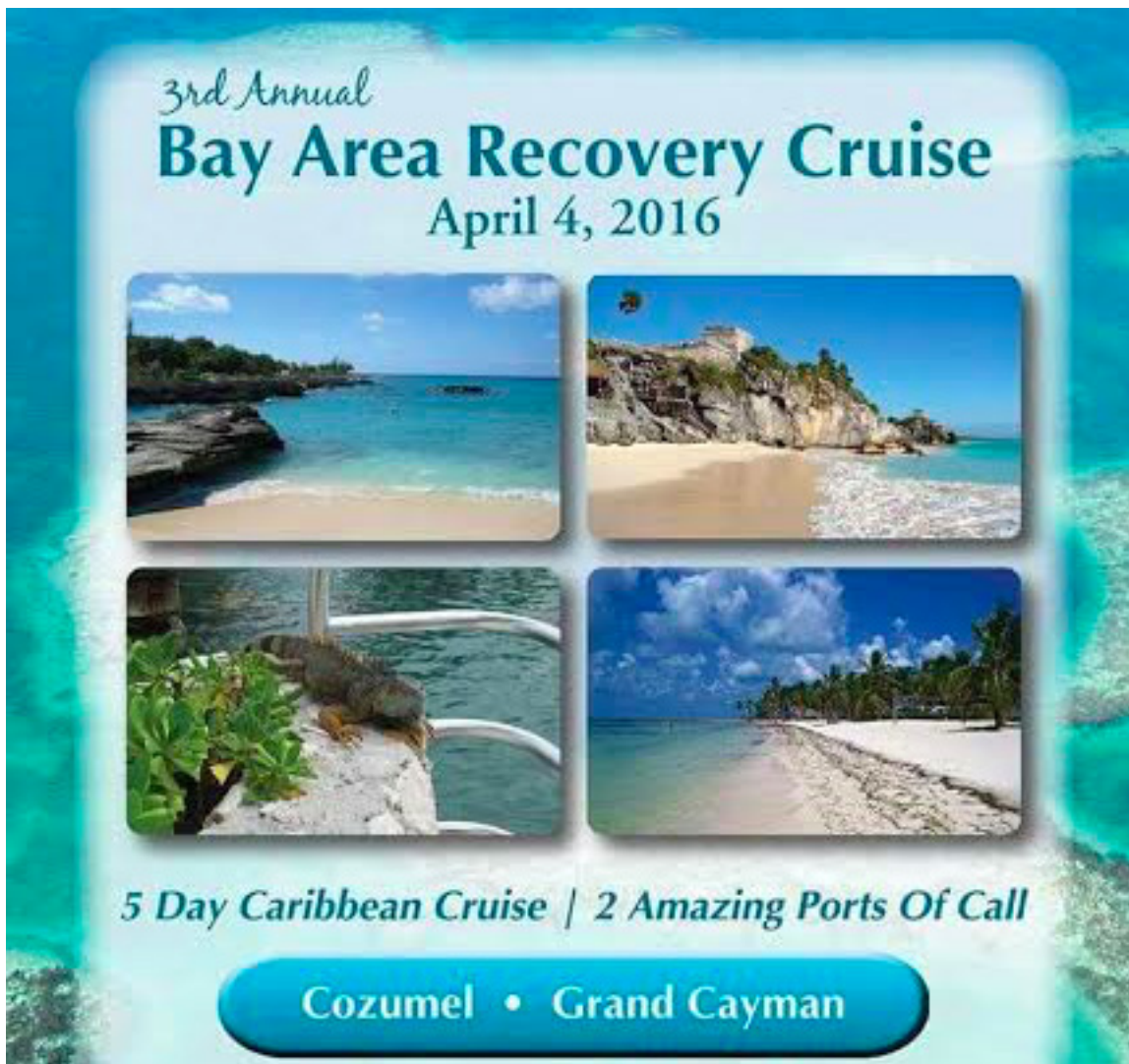
Prayer Garden meeting, 7:30 am, but daylight savings time. I woke up around 8 am, laid in bed for a while.

Went downstairs to hear the morning speaker,

another guy with 30 years clean, topic 'Life on life's terms'. He knocked it out the park.

I am glad I went and hope my experience will help me to be a better man.

-William C



3rd Annual
Bay Area Recovery Cruise
April 4, 2016

5 Day Caribbean Cruise | 2 Amazing Ports Of Call

Cozumel • Grand Cayman



For Additional Info:
CALL
(727) 408-5007

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

Z Z I N T E G R I T Y T C N D U K Y
 U C U Q Y X G L U O V S Y D E H M G
 Z D E C T Y T S E N O H Y H Y V K P
 N X C O U R A G E O U S T H Z D O W
 A P T V E N I L P I C S I D W C A L
 W E F X H A R I N O A T L W T Q C A
 C R D A R X B G P H L D I V D B C Y
 L S Q C E C L T T B Z L B E M H E T
 Q E B D D S J I T A L O I J D U P I
 F R S A N A A C Q I E I S J O M T L
 W V F V E F D V N X X P N D Y I A A
 E E A I R W H G I G R L O I N L N U
 E R O T R Y N D U J B L P H Q I C T
 A E G P U E G C O F O J S A Z T E I
 T N O K S B G O I M E A E G Z Y K R
 D C O S S L J N X U X Z R W U G S I
 R E F G N I D N A T S R E D N U G P
 S C O U R A G E Z Q B M T E A B Q S

ACCEPTANCE	INTEGRITY
COURAGE	LOVE
COURAGEOUS	PERSERVERENCE
DISCIPLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
FAITH	SPIRITUALITY
HONESTY	SURRENDER
HOPE	UNDERSTANDING
HUMILITY	WILLINGNESS



Whether you are an NA member, a professional who works with recovering addicts, an incarcerated member, or a member who carries the message via service with Hospital and Institutions; the Reaching Out newsletter curated by NA World Services may be a resource for you. Reaching Out in its design helps incarcerated addicts connect to the NA program of recovery, enhances H&I efforts, and offers experience from members who have successfully transitioned from the 'inside' to be productive members of society. All are invited to share their experience, strength, and hope in the Reaching Out newsletter. The Reaching Out publication is seeking paidsubscribers to assist in supporting our continued efforts to distribute the magazine to our members housed in state and federal facilities. Ask your home group to subscribe and help us carry the message.

Contact Gilber O. at 813.245.5399 or via email at gbs92101@hotmail.com.

Anniversaries - March, April, May & June

A New Way		Ira B 5/3/2010	5	The Breakfast Club	
Russ N 6/23/2003	12	Samantha M 5/20/2013	2	John C 3/3/2014	1
Breakfast Club		Teresa K 6/1/2006	9	Keena L 3/26/2011	4
John C 3/3/2014	1	Never Too Young		Rick R 5/11/2013	2
Rick R 5/11/2013	2	To Recover		The Truth	
Grow or Go		Michael B 3/21/2014	1	Patricia S 3/12/2014	1
Saasha S 3/26/2009	6	Jo D M 4/19/2013	2	Rick F 4/20/2013	2
Steph H 4/9/2005	10	Ava L 4/11/2014	1	Renee R 4/22/2014	1
Amy M 6/4/2013	2	Clinton W 5/1/2010	5	The War Is Over	
Kirk K 6/14/1988	27	Shawn B 6/6/2006	9	Victoria L 3/26/2002	13
Derek B 6/22/2012	3	Michele O 6/2/2009	6	Amy M 3/13/2009	6
Andy C 6/25/2012	3	Garrett P 6/19/2013	2	Stephanie M 4/15/2003	12
High Lie		New Bite of Serenity		Hope L 4/10/2006	9
Dan A 3/18/1985	30	Barbara R 6/19/2012	3	Joe V 4/10/2006	9
Amy A 3/8/2006	9	Jennifer M 6/24/2011	4	Rj K 4/27/2007	8
Bud F 3/7/2010	5	Valencia N 6/24/2012	3	Bryan M 4/30/2007	8
Pete M 5/2/1995	20	New Life		Jackie M 5/24/1999	16
Jill M 5/13/2011	4	Bertha B 4/27/2007	8	Matt P 5/25/2005	10
Carl C 5/22/2011	4	Marlon R 5/22/2006	9	Lee C 5/25/2005	10
Heather L 5/23/2013	2	Quest For Serenity		Kurt W 5/22/2009	6
Hope In Lutz		Scotty D 4/5/1995	20	Matt S 6/10/2010	5
Jay W 5/1/2006	9	Aida S 5/7/1995	20	Brendon C 6/16/2013	2
Matthew J 6/19/2013	2	Darwin S 5/23/2007	8	Together We Can	
How It Works		Radical Recovery		Mario F 4/27/2010	5
Ninnah R 4/6/1990	25	Kimbra S 3/3/2014	1	Women's Hope	
Danny M 4/30/2002	13	Willie M 4/5/1995	20	Kimberly H. 3/2/2014	1
Diane B 5/1/1981	34	Kelvin B 4/8/2008	7	Selena M. 3/30/1999	16
Hyde Park NA		Carlos N 5/23/1991	24	Jill M. 5/1/2007	8
Meredith D 3/15/1991	24	Deb E 6/5/2013	2	Emily C. 5/14/1984	31
Kaylyn O. 5/19/2013	2	Recovery Central		Theresa K. 6/1/2006	9
Lauren C 5/23/2014	1	Damien 3/9/2008	7		
In The Middle		Michele S 3/7/2014	1		
Kenneth B 3/23/1990	25	Gordon N 4/11/1983	32		
Andy S 5/22/2008	7	Pito 4/17/1984	31		
Chris B 5/24/2014	1	Bobby R 4/22/2002	13		
Randy M 6/17/2004	11	Deborah N 5/2/2006	9		
Tom W 6/21/2011	4	Nicole P 5/23/2013	2		
Keep The Faith		Carolyn H 5/10/2014	1		
Gus C 3/5/2001	14	Recovery In The Hood			
Steve S 5/15/2002	13	Richard W 6/18/1997	18		
Roger A 5/6/2006	9	Squeaky Clean			
Toby C 6/12/2006	9	Charlie O 3/10/2012	3		
Monday Meditation		Louis 4/18/1995	20		
Savannah D 6/5/2011	4	Mark F 4/16/2012	3		
NA 180		Tino M 5/7/2012	3		
Patricia E. 3/1/2012	3	Ben S 6/18/1990	25		
Charlie O 3/3/2012	3	Robert A 6/8/2004	11		
David R. 3/24/1976	39	Sunset Solutions			
Ron H 4/20/2003	12	Laura E 3/7/2005	10		
Rick F 4/20/2013	2	Joe D 3/17/1984	31		
Cathy H 4/15/2014	1	Louis G 4/18/1985	30		
Norma 5/2/1988	27	Carole K 5/20/1986	29		
Jim M. 5/6/2000	15	Craig K 6/14/1989	26		
		Frank V 6/21/1988	27		

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.