

## May/June 2018

### How It Works (a Funcoast series on the steps and traditions)

#### Step Five: "We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

I've heard lots of people in the rooms say that the fourth step was by far the toughest step for them to complete, because it was the hardest one for them to start. They were afraid of going back down the path their lives had taken, fearing the act of revisiting these memories would cause them to feel the pain all over again. It takes commitment and courage to stand in the face of such fear and continue on. Working the previous steps with a sponsor helps to prepare us for this monumental undertaking. This is only the beginning of our new life, we will need to call on the foundation of our recovery many times in the course of our journey through the steps, so we must build it strong. For me it was the fifth step that caused fear and anguish. I could write and write on my fourth step, digging deeper into my past, but the thoughts of

sharing my findings with another human being and the God of my understanding scared me to the point of inactivity. The fifth step also asks me to identify my true nature, to reveal this to another. This is where the rubber hits the road, this is where it gets real! In the steps I'm asked many times to put my faith in a Higher Power, stepping out on faith is what our program is built on. In the fifth step I have an opportunity to practice my newly found faith, and I do so by working this step even though I'm unsure of the results. Working step five is not simply a reading of our fourth step, we draw upon the faith we gained in the second step when we share this step aloud, facing up to the exact nature of our wrongs. We find that by hearing ourselves make these admissions we get out of the denial that our disease thrives on. We made a decision in the third step to turn over our will and our lives to our Higher Power, this step gives us a chance to put that decision into action, courageously trusting the relationship we are building with the God of our understanding.

This step can be a humbling experience, we may find that we are not the "larger than life" personality we thought we were. Most of our actions were dictated by our disease and have been exaggerated in our minds. Our need to feel good about our past actions may have given us

a distorted view of ourselves.

After working this step we may finally see ourselves as we truly are, and begin to enjoy just being that person. By no means is this, or any other one of the steps a quick fix, our need for instant gratification can cause us to expect all of our problems to just disappear after we work a few steps. In the course of our journey through the steps we strive to awaken our spirit and grow into a new way to live. We now choose to not have our feelings deadened and we must face these feelings. We no longer need to be numbed to get through our day, we have a program that is introducing us to spiritual principles, practicing these principles is how we grow. With the new friends we have in recovery and in the meetings, we are seeing others doing the impossible...and we can do it too. Now that we are beginning to see our true nature, and our trust in the program is strengthening, we go on to the sixth step.

-Joe Addict

(Reprint from the Upper Cumberland Area of NA "The Guardian", May 2010)

#### Step Six: "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Entirely Ready In Step Five, I was ready to admit I had been wrong. In Step Six, I became ready to have the defects of character I had discovered in step five

removed. A key concept in Step Six is entirely ready. By August of '93, I had "hit bottom" all the way. Such is not always the case when people first encounter the Twelve Steps. In other words, I had done the maximum amount of damage I could do in my life. My life was beyond the help of human intervention. I was beyond the help of self-discipline. My life and my relationships needed divine intervention and healing. Had I sought to work Step Six before hitting bottom, I would not have been entirely ready. Only partially ready. God brought me to Step Six after careful preparation. A second key concept is that only God can remove my defects of character. I could not cleanse myself of my past, my failures, or my character defects. Once I admitted my mistakes, I also had to admit that I could not overcome them using my own willpower. I admitted I needed God's help. (Part of my ego problem had been the idea that I did not need God's help; that attitude put me beyond God's help.) By hitting bottom intellectually, emotionally, financially, socially, mentally, and spiritually, my overinflated pride and ego were humbled. My self-sufficiency was exposed as an insane lie; my power was shown to be powerless; and my self was shown to be nothing more than vague shadows of my work, my toys, my status, and my abilities. All that I had created to protect (Continued on Page 2)

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my ego in my proud, self-willed, fragile little world was shattered. I was alone, helpless and broken before God. Once I was entirely broken, I became clay in God's hands, to be reshaped according to God's will.

-Anonymous

(Reprinted from the Upper Cumberland Area of NA "The Guardian", June 2010)

**Tradition Five: "Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."**

**Tradition Six: "An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose."**

Dear Family:

I must first say how grateful I am that someone has asked me to share my experience, strength and hope regarding Traditions 5 & 6. Tradition 5 clearly states that our number one purpose is to carry a clear message of recovery. Not any message, but the message of NA. We can do this in our own way. Sometimes it's through passion and conviction; other times it's through peace. It can even be given through times of sadness. Every addict, in the rooms, in society, deserves to hear, "The message is hope and the promise of freedom, that an addict, any addict, can stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."

When working Tradition 6 for the first time from the "Guiding Principles –The Spirit of Our Traditions," it was revealed to me that the "things" we use to avoid feeling are the things that feed our self-obsession. My experience and understanding of this tradition is to not suggest or endorse (in a meeting) a specific detox or treatment facility. Outside of the rooms, I can make

a suggestions, through my own experience, which one or where. NA is, by itself and through its members, enough to sufficiently carry the message. As I require "stuff," it can end up diverting me. Those things are good, but they are not recovery. I am just another recovering addict, not better or worse than anyone in the rooms. I am grateful to be alive and be of service,

An Anonymous Addict

### Poetry Corner

My thoughts still  
run the same,

Sometimes insane,  
Replaying again and again the  
same old pain....  
It's just lame  
Couldn't let go,  
How do I, I don't know  
It's been a spirit drain,  
Same ole never ending game.  
Time heals all wounds they say  
Doesn't seem to go that way....

All I can do is let go,  
And respect you,  
Cry later if I have to.  
-Stan A.

**"Forever is NOW"**

There is never a way out,  
only thru,  
This is what she showed her -  
What is meant to last,  
will never leave-  
So when I am gone,  
I don't want you to grieve.

The other one looked up,  
and gazed into the others' eyes,  
Where, alas,  
unspoken words were once told;

The wise woman did  
not take heed,  
For she knew,  
as she always had,  
That this ride, would one day,  
Come to an end

But at last you showed her,  
what it was to be a friend;  
Deep down she knew,  
but all this time too afraid,  
To Show the same, out of fear  
of having her heart cheaply sold,

As it once was,  
and once not too long ago  
from it now,

The pain is dull,  
albeit it is deep,  
This hurt I fear cannot weep -

What was I supposed to learn  
from that?  
Now that you're done,  
well you tell me -  
What the f\*\* am I supposed to  
do with THAT?

F\*\*\* you for leaving me,  
Why did you leave me on my  
own?

F\*\*\* you for giving me,  
Such a special piece of you -  
Just moments before,  
you sailed a ship -  
The last time it would be to  
leave the shore -

Alas, Neil Young says,  
It is better to burn out, than  
To fade away

I don't know where it all went,  
I wish I could say,  
I know where it is that you have  
gone

I don't know what heaven is,  
But I sure hope  
Whatever it is that it finds you,  
That it is thus found with  
love and safety.  
Open arms,  
and one that will stay.

You deserve the eternity of  
light and love,  
You did indeed leave this world  
far better than you found it

It hurts deep down, to think of  
you now  
Where it is you have gone to,  
Where it is that I am found.

For, he said to her, do not weep  
when I am gone,  
All that is golden should be  
stardust,  
Get us back to this garden  
upon the heavens lawn

I hope you are up there,  
I hope you do not feel pain,  
For when you were here, you  
were an anchor to so many,  
And you did so, but alas not  
one time in vain

Between what is said and not  
spoken,  
And apart from what is told,  
Does one not seek - but to  
finally see,  
No longer the lighthouse,  
For I am now sustained -  
from within -  
I am the light-keeper,  
And not of sin.  
It is now, she is the I -  
I is the She,  
And this is what should be  
done.

Not far above us,  
Not too far below us,  
Awaits with beautiful colors,  
and thus we have found,  
In one another,  
That the only thing that  
remains is love,  
And what lies between us -

Is the space,  
We call,  
the Great Infinite

It is where you go,  
It is where you start,  
It is where the space fills -  
That from which can only start  
again.

Tell her you love her,  
Before it is too late.  
Do not leave her with the  
chance it might be  
Left up to fate

For if you really care about her,  
You will not be weary of your  
own heart,  
Instead you will freely give -  
What it is, that is everywhere  
All of it, except from inside  
one's own head.

For it is the spirit that loves,  
And it is the spirit that sees,  
The wonder that lies,  
Deep down inside

Know this now,  
And know this truth then,  
Time does not create, nor take  
away,  
The love that two souls who do  
not separate,  
Share until the end of time.

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# Ask An Addict

## What is this Area Service thing I keep hearing so much about?

“The Area Service Committee (ASC) The area committee is the primary means by which the services of a local NA community are administered. The area committee is composed of group service representatives, administrative officers (chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer), subcommittee chairpersons, and the area’s regional committee members. The area committee elects its own officers, subcommittee chairpersons, and RCMs.” (Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous, vii)

“Area service committees are ultimately responsible to the groups they serve. Narcotics Anonymous groups send group service representatives (GSRs) to serve on the area committee. While still maintaining final responsibility and authority for area services, they invest enough

delegated authority in their GSRs—and through them, in the area committee—for the necessary work to get done. NA groups also send money to the area committee, money needed to coordinate panels, maintain phonelines, and conduct public information activities. Through their contributions of money and manpower, the groups exercise both their responsibility and their authority for NA services.” (Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous, p. 46)

“There are three groups of participants in most area service committees: GSRs and their alternates, administrative officers, and subcommittee chairpersons. The Seventh Concept for NA Service says that, “All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body’s decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.” Group service representatives provide a “grass roots” perspective to the area decision-making process, helping ensure that the committee’s feet are planted firmly on the ground. Administrative officers and subcommittee chairpersons also bear substantial responsibility for the fulfillment of area services. Their ongoing

growth and experience in carrying out their duties is an invaluable resource to the area. The Area Service Committee as it develops and expresses its group conscience. We ought never allow a base of valuable experience to be created without utilizing it to the fullest. Each area is responsible to create its own decision-making plan. In doing so, area committees should carefully consider the Seventh Concept.” (Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous, p. 46-47)

### From our Local Tampa Funcoast Area Website:

NA’s primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery. Therefore, NA groups have created a service structure that meets regularly to serve the needs of those groups.

### Area Service Committee (ASC) and Subcommittee Monthly Meetings:

ASC:  
Second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. at First Church of God, 2202 E. Busch Blvd, Tampa, FL 33612 (ASC Admin Officers meet at 11 a.m.)

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## 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 7 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 Gilber O. at 813.245.5399.



# Anniversaries

## May/June

### A New Way

Bridgette R. 12/10/16 18 mths  
Mike S. 4/22/01 17 years  
Humberto P. 4/29/17 1 year  
Art B. 5/12/97 20 years  
Jenn W. 7/14/17 1 year

### Freedom from Pain

Joel B. 5/8/98 20 years

### Grow or Go

Alex G. 4/16/17 1 year  
Amy M. 6/4/13 5 years  
Robert A. 6/8/05 13 years  
Kirk K. 6/14/88 30 years  
Derek B. 6/22/12 6 years

### Heights of NA

Louis G. 4/18/85 33 years  
Renee C. 5/5/88 30 years

### High Lie

Andy C. 6/25/12 6 years  
Chris M. 7/18/10 8 years  
Craig C. 7/23/03 15 years  
Mary S. 7/31/08 10 years

### Hyde Park NA

Bob H. 4/26/96 22 years  
Javier G. 5/9/93 25 years  
Darla W. 5/17/17 1 year  
Lauren C. 5/23/14 4 years  
Bruce T. 6/23/17 1 year

### Monday Meditation

Michael H. 5/7/14 4 years  
Ashley M. 6/1/13 5 years  
Savannah R. 6/6/11 7 years  
Daniel L. 2/10/17 18 months  
Craig M. 6/19/15 3 years

### New Bite of Serenity

Lisa I. 4/23/12 6 years  
Romano 5/3/12 6 years  
Joyce 5/12/12 6 years  
Steve C. 6/10/95 23 years  
Wade W. 6/21/10 8 years  
Barbra 6/24/15 3 years

### New Life

Bertha B. 4/27/07 11 years  
Marlon R. 5/22/06 12 years  
Nikki T. 7/26/16 2 years

### Quest for Serenity

Aida W. 5/7/95 23 years  
Cheryl H. 7/13/06 12 years

### Recovery Central

William C. 5/26/87 31 years

### Recovery in Riverview

Carol B. 6/2/04 14 years  
Cheryl C. 8/10/90 28 years

### Renegade Recovery

Nicole T. 7/3/16 2 years  
Tony L. 7/4/17 1 year  
Murray B. 7/16/16 2 years  
Charles T. 8/5/03 15 years  
Enrique R. 8/13/99 19 years

### Stepping Up

Larry W. 7/13/92 26 years  
Gerald W. 7/14/05 13 years  
Mildred M. 7/8/07 11 years

### Sunset Solution

Frank V. 6/21/88 30 years

### Tampa Unity Group

George B. 5/4/01 17 years  
Jenning P. 5/5/15 3 years

### The Workshop

Jeff S. 6/12/16 2 years  
Dave C. 6/21/00 18 years  
Pam A. 6/22/15 3 years  
Crystal B. 7/7/95 23 years

### Together We Can

Lillian C. 5/18/94 24 years  
Lenora M. 6/10/02 16 years

# Upcoming

## Events & Info

### The Bridge Group of Narcotics Anonymous:

<http://www.thebridgena.org>

The Bridge Group was formed in December of 2008. Meetings are now registered with World Services, and we are now offering 7 meetings a week on this same phone number ((712) 832-8320, 387870#) to addicts in need. All it requires is a phone and the ability to dial long distance. Due to the prohibitively high cost of toll-free numbers, and limited 7th tradition funds, we have not been able to offer a toll-free option.

### Life on Life's Terms Epic Bowling Wednesday, June 13th 8:30-10:30 PM \$7 (includes shoes)

Oakfield Lanes, 1001 Oakfield Dr., Brandon FL 33511

### FRCNA 37: The Courage to Change July 5-8th

Tampa Hilton Downtown,  
211 North Tampa Street, Tampa FL 33602  
Registration is \$45.00, merchandise and banquets,  
entertainment etc. available at additional cost

### New meetings to support: Just for Today meeting of NA in Plant City Full meeting times:

Saturday 8:00-9:00 PM (Varies)

Wednesday 6:30-7:30PM (OD)

Thursday 7:30-8:30 PM (OD)

Sunday 5:00-6:00PM (Literature Study)

Address: 203 Thomas St. Plant City, FL 33563

### Fresh Start meeting of NA Saturdays, 7:30-8:45 PM

Address: 1402 East Chilkoot Avenue, Tampa FL

### WCNA 37 - The Magic Is Still Real 30 August through 2 September 2018

Orlando, FL, USA

PRE-REGISTRATION

In addition to helping us better plan WCNA,  
here's another incentive for pre-registering:

All members who pre-register by 31 July 2018  
(without cancellation) will be entered in a drawing

for two (2) full convention packages,

including registration and all WCNA special event tickets!  
(Does not include pre-reg merchandise)

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.