



## July/August 2017

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

#### Step 7. "We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

The last time I wrote on the 7th step, I wrote my attitude toward what is important has changed. I no longer feel that whatever is going on with me or around me has to immediately have my attention, acting out on the feelings of wanting things to be right or perfect in my often imperfect thinking. For example: me wanting others to be on time but I'm always running late: "my right now" shortcomings almost always increase feelings of anxiety for me without question. This has always created a domino effect of overwhelming panic and worry, then ending in me taking matters into my own hands (acting out). I no longer believe I have the power to make anything or anyone conform to what I think maybe, right, important or urgent, placing those unrealistic expectations on myself and others.

When I am practicing humility, I recognize my spirit is calm, I feel vulnerable, relaxed, humble but most of all, I am being open-minded, willing and honest some of the keys to this

step, more importantly learning to practice being honest with myself. When working this step, it affects my recovery by allowing me to grow spiritually into a calm mild-mannered person. When I humble myself, I feel the relief of not having to manipulate or control whatever is going on in my life or around me at that moment. The step-working guide states it this is the difference between humility and humiliation. I can take a deep breath, regroup to gather my thoughts and emotions, say a silent prayer and proceed with the next right thing to do, so that I don't subject myself to humiliation. Practicing this step allows me to be patient with myself and not act on every thought or feeling. The 7th step also gives me the opportunity to relax and allow the God of my understanding to work things out for me. If one of my shortcomings arises, for example: I'm in the grocery store and the person in front of me is taking too long, normally I would start sucking my teeth, rolling my eyes, huffing and puffing, or making gestures like could you "F\*\*ing hurry up!!." This is me acting intolerant and impatient; in reality the exact nature of this dilemma is that I don't have control over the length of time the person in front of me is taking. If I had no time to wait, I could very come back or leave a little earlier to avoid long lines. In my sick thinking, I figure that if I make all these gestures I can somehow make the person feel threatened or intimidated. This type behavior was

associated with me bullying my way through situations in my early days growing up. I am grateful for this 7th step because the 6th step allowed me to see myself and my reoccurring twisted perceptions, and then come to a place of willingness, enough to humble myself and ask God for help in removing those shortcomings that are associated with a few of my defects of control, arrogance and fear. When I feel myself getting grandiose or acting as if I am entitled, I stop, take a deep breath, say a silent prayer so that I can get back in the solution of operating in humility, "the ideal state for this addict".

The 7th step in the working guide states that in time we'll find that God has worked in our lives, we may even be startled by the level of maturity or spirituality we've demonstrated in handling a situation that in years past would have had us acting very unspiritual (pg. 87). For this I am grateful. The 7th step is a step that consists of action and prayer. Through prayer and action, God removing my shortcomings and establishing a newfound humility, I go on to making my list in step 8. Grateful Addict,  
Kindell M.

#### Step 8. "We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

The 8th step has always held an element of terror; we actually commit to paper all the damage we caused in our addiction, all the havoc and chaos, all the hurt we caused others - this is scary stuff, at least for me. As an addict, I know that I wanted, at all costs to justify my behavior so as to look (if not feel) free of any guilt or responsibility. I didn't want to face the wreckage of my past, and I certainly did not want to deal with the fear and shame I felt at the idea of facing the people I had hurt. What if they didn't forgive me? What if they didn't LIKE me anymore? I forget to take in account that there were a number of people who already didn't like me, due to my horrific behavior in the past... and I survived anyway.

My sponsor told me in no uncertain terms, that the 8th step was not about others forgiving me, it was about being WILLING. I was reminded of a Biblical story in which a father is asked to sacrifice his only son to prove faithfulness in God. Just at the moment the father was about to strike the fatal blow to his beloved child, God said; (and I'm paraphrasing here) "you don't have to kill him, I just wanted to see if you were willing."

I know; in order to progress in recovery, that I must have faith that the actions called for in the Steps, difficult though they may be, are for a purpose that I often cannot see  
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until I am looking back at them.  
“...a list of all persons we had harmed;” it is difficult to envision having enough paper on which to write such a LONG list, but that reality threatens to be overwhelming. No one apparently escaped unscathed from my all-consuming self-centeredness. This addict can sink into self-pity until a loving sponsor reminds me to see the other part of this step (...and became willing to make amends to them all”). I do not, at least not yet, have to speak of any wrong-doing to anyone’s face – I simply have to “become willing.”

I see the evidence of this step working in the lives of other recovering addicts, and I continue to want what they have. Once again, I pray to my Higher Power to see me through and I say out loud “I am willing to do whatever it takes to recover;” I am willing to face the excruciating truth, and I am willing to finally give those I damaged the long overdue opportunity to say how they feel. I am willing to continue my journey down the lovely, terrifying, and exhilarating road of recovery.

In Love and Light  
Meredith D.

-Reprinted from Clean Times  
August 1996

**Tradition 7. “Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”**

What happened to the Seventh Tradition?

And...don’t forget to bring some money with you to your home group. There’s an opportunity awaiting you there to quietly express your gratitude and your pride in your fellowship, by helping to support it.

It’s called the Seventh Tradition.

-Anonymous, New Jersey, USA

–January 1989

The money tradition?

Think back to when you first heard of Narcotics Anonymous. Was it while in jail or an institution, or as an individual? We all got here from different sources, but someone

helped us along the way by carrying that message to us.... So, before we are quick to say that the area or region or whoever does not deserve our money, or that the area or region is dictating to us, or whatever reason we may have for being afraid to put a dollar in the basket..., we should ask ourselves, “Do I really want to do this alone?” If it were not for the efforts of all of the above, in essence, that is where we would be.

-Dana S, Tennessee, USA

–April 2003

What I value

Many things have changed since got clean. Most of the things I consume have doubled or tripled in price. Now I am fortunate enough each year to be able to donate an amount almost as great as the dreaded back tax bill I owed when I first got clean. Yet, this year I realized I’m still putting \$1.00 in the basket, and I haven’t established a system of regular, planned giving to the fellowship that saved my life.... So this year I’ve decided to do something about it, and here’s my plan:

- I’ll put at least \$2.00 in the basket, and when I can spare it, \$5.00. That’s the equivalent of the inflation rate of a gallon of gas.
- On my recovery anniversary, I’ll donate \$10.00 to NA World Services for every year I’ve been clean.
- I’ll set up a monthly donation plan to NA World Services, just like I have with other organizations. (I went to the NA website and found it’s pretty easy to do this by using the donations portal.)
- I’ll remember to share my blessings—when I get a bonus or a raise, I’ll make sure that my giving reflects my good fortune.

-Khalil, Georgia, USA

–April 2007

-Reprinted from the NA Way  
Magazine April 2012

**Tradition 8. “Narcotics**

**Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.”**

At first glance, this is a much less exciting tradition than “the money tradition” or “our only requirement for membership.” But the 8th tradition ensures that no individual becomes a model of our fellowship, or a “professional” recovering addict in NA. Sure, there are professionals that work in the field of addiction-treatment (which is certainly not recovery), and professionals who are also recovering addicts, but that doesn’t make either of these kinds of people any more or less important or able to recover in Narcotics Anonymous. Many of us who stay clean for some time develop careers and become professionals at something, but it doesn’t change who we are in NA. My first job when I came here was selling porn on the phone, and now I do something much more socially acceptable and prestigious, but I recover exactly the same way now as I did when I came in.

This tradition also talks about special workers; those professionals our fellowship hires at times to do specific tasks. I have had the opportunity, because of my training in my own field, to work as a special worker for NAWS, and I was grateful to apply what I do in the world to serve the fellowship in this capacity. As a professional, I did my tasks for NAWS according to the standards of my profession and the guidelines set forth by NAWS as I would for any other employer. What I do professionally requires training and demands more work than I could reasonably donate, and on the NAWS side, accepting such a donation would mean that the fellowship might be in danger of violating the 7th tradition by relying too heavily on outside support. My experience in this capacity was interesting, but again it did not change how I recover.

-Clean Times Staff

**Updates from NAWS**

We are writing with news about updates to the NA Meeting Search app that have just been made. The latest version has a number of improvements.

You can set preferences to save your favorite meetings, send meeting info to others by text in addition to email, and set distances by kilometers as well as miles. You can also search separately for phone or internet meetings.

A couple of new features have been added to the app, including a clean date component and a link to NAWS News.

The app is available on iTunes for all iOS devices and Google Play for Android.

We are very grateful to everyone who suggested changes and improvements. Your input has made a very big difference.

Thank you!

**Reaching Out**

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 paid subscribers 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

## Poetry

### Caterpillar Rising

How lucky you are,  
sweet butterfly;  
You transform from a  
worm to an ornament of  
the earth.

From your cocoon you  
emerge as a gift to the  
Gods.

You greet the morning  
light, and kiss the early  
dew of the earth.

You taste the sweet  
nectar of the red roses  
and lilies

And you soar above  
the clouds and caress  
the skyline with such  
beauty...

Yet I am still a worm; a  
vagabond on the earth  
While you float within  
the summers breeze you  
Rise;

Enjoying the Artistry of  
the Creator

Fly Sweet Butterfly, Fly  
Oh how I envy thee...  
-Penny J.

### THE MASK

"A 'No' uttered from  
deepest conviction is  
Better and greater  
than a 'yes' merely to  
please

Or to avoid trouble and  
the mask comes off  
This debilitating com-  
panion for far too long  
Yet an extraordinary  
teacher...learning from it  
Allowing the sights of  
funnies - facts and nega-  
tive

Features...time is now  
to take back freedom

My own sensitive per-  
sonality...refusing to deal

With negative person-  
alities...through it all  
Gathering strength...

neither fake...made mind  
To combat this unruly  
vampire...no longer a

Struggle...setting  
limits...fighting with an  
iron hand

And a velvet glove...not  
in the business of fixing  
anyone

Enabling always back-  
fires...no-longer feeling  
sorry of self

Those emotions have  
been set on a shelf...

Patience is no-longer  
the option...only giving  
five minutes

Of listening to discuss  
a solution

The mask is taken off  
and I'm ready for the  
guilt trip

Keep in mind I am a  
friend and I love you  
But this is all I can  
now offer you

This mask taken off...  
snapping out of this  
victim

Mentality...remember  
how blessed life is  
Compared to where life  
is now

I'm not fighting for  
you no more

I'm fighting to regain  
myself esteem and cope  
From a more centered  
place...realizing it is a  
luxury

To feel lonely without  
you...a supposed to be  
Romantic partner...so  
let me call your name

Emotional vampire...  
the gift of time sur-  
mounts

Negative emotions...  
instead of wallowing in  
What is given and  
what is not...yet always  
taken

For granted...no longer  
accepting...neither walk-  
ing

Into the imprisonment  
of indulgence...and when  
I'm having a bad day...  
one need to step far away

With this perspective  
in mind...the mask has  
been  
removed...

-Jeff S.

## Hospitals and Institutions Book Drive

We are collecting **Basic  
Texts, How it Works and  
Why, Living Clean: The  
Journey Continues and  
the Just for Today Daily  
Meditation** books for the  
institutions we carry our  
message to. We accept  
new and used books.

Please help us continue  
to carry our message and  
the literature to these  
facilities. You can give  
these books to any H&I  
member or bring them  
to our Subcommittee  
before Area Service. "We  
only keep what we have  
by giving it away."

## Writing Steps for Recovery

### (Behind the Walls)

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

The Florida Region of Narcot-  
ics Anonymous has now helped  
introduce 23 self-sufficient NA  
meetings in FL and beyond; in-  
cluding, Coleman Federal Penn,  
Alabama, NW FL, Georgia,  
and South Carolina. The pro-  
cess 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 real-  
ize our primary purpose by fur-  
ther implementing the "Writing  
Steps for Recovery (Behind the  
Walls)" initiative.

How can I help? Join the  
"Writing The Steps for Recov-  
ery (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 guide-  
lines on the program, contact  
Gilber O. at 813.245.5399.



# Anniversaries July & August

# Upcoming Events & Info

A New Way  
Rich V. 1/4/16 18 months  
Ellen R. 1/22/16 18 months  
Beth D. 7/13/16 1 year  
Amy C. 8/10/10 7 years  
Alex K. 9/2/98 19 years  
Fernando S. 9/20/06 11 years

Brandon at Noon  
Steven F. 7/5/14 3 years  
Leala T. 7/20/16 1 year  
Emily C. 8/22/10 7 years

Living the Program  
Danielle G. 3/9/14 3 years

Grow or Go  
Brie H. 7/14/2015 2 years  
Deborah AN. 8/23/2010 7 years

NA 180  
Jewels S. 7/10/93 24 years  
Garrette B. 8/3/90 27 years

New Bite of Serenity  
Cassandra H. 8/92 25 years  
Seth W. 8/12 5 years  
Steve S. 8/10 7 years

New Life  
Nikki T. 7/26/16 1 year

New Tampa NA  
Jason L. 8/7/07 10 years

Quest for Serenity  
Cheryl 7/13/06 11 years

Recovery Central  
Eddie R. 7/5/90 27 years  
Janice B. 7/7/05 12 years  
Bruce M. 7/19/86 31 years  
Alejandro A. 8/22/00 17 years

Renegade Recovery  
Murray R. 7/16/16 1 year  
Charles T. 8/5/03 14 years  
Enrique R. 8/13/99 18 years

Stepping Up  
Robert I. 6/28/11 6 years  
Mildred M. 7/8/07 10 years  
Larry W. 7/13/92 25 years  
Gerald W. 7/14/05 12 years  
Mary P. 8/18/11 6 years

The Heights of NA  
Robert A. 6/8/05 12 years

The War is Over  
Jennifer A. 7/3/14 3 years  
Charlene P. 7/7/16 1 year  
Bill M. 7/20/12 5 years  
Raj M. 7/21/13 4 years  
Ed D. 8/4/15 2 years  
Kaitlynn P. 8/7/14 3 years  
Wendy J. 8/9/14 3 years  
John M. 8/13/84 33 years  
Chris K. 8/15/12 5 years  
Gray G. 8/22/14 3 years  
Emily C. 8/22/10 7 years  
Deedee T. 8/24/11 6 years  
Amanda K. 8/25/12 5 years  
Millie 8/26/88 29 years

Women of Serenity  
8/28/05 12 years

The Workshop  
Chris D. 7/10/02 15 years  
John B. 7/21/08 9 years  
Anthony R. 7/27/16 1 year  
Charles V. 8/9/89 28 years  
Eric O. 8/18/84 33 years  
Yaya 8/30/79 38 years

Ties that Bind Us  
Brett P. 6/27/01 16 years  
Michael L. 8/11/07 10 years

Funcoast Area Activities presents:

Speaker Jam & Fish Fry

Date: August 19, 2017 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Place: Seminole Heights UMC,

6111 Central (@ Hanna)

Food and Beverages for sale

Radical Recovery's 31st Anniversary

Date: Monday, September 4, 2017 9:00 AM

Place: Oak Grove Church, Sligh & Habana

Free Food, Drinks and Water \$1.00; T-shirts

(\$10 for S M L XL, \$12.00 2x 3x 4x)

NAByPhone.com

Originally started in 2008 as outreach to carry an NA meeting to a hospitalized member in FL, teleconference meetings have grown to meet the needs of many members. The diversity of our membership is represented by hospitalized and home-bound members including older members who can no longer get out, professional drivers on the road, geographically challenged members, parents who stay home with children, victims of really bad storms who swell our meetings for a few days until the weather clears, members of smaller communities who are seeking more anonymity for gut level sharing and those who are simply seeking multiple flavors of recovery. NA teleconference meetings are a wonderful addition to a well-rounded recovery platform and can serve as life-saving outreach and are a great way to expand your support network nationally or even internationally. However, they are not a replacement for face-to-face meeting attendance. Attend your local NA.

Share some hugs.

For more information, visit [NAByPhone.com](http://NAByPhone.com)

**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

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.