



## May/June 2017

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

**Step 5. "We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."**

**Step 6. "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I choose to remain anonymous since we are involved in an anonymous program. However, anyone that knows me will know who it is when they read this. I was asked to share my experience, strength and hope on Steps 5 and 6. In Step 5, I learned a valuable lesson of integrity and freedom. Let's back this up a bit. When I was working Step 4 I did not listen to a suggestion of keeping it simple, short bullet points, you can expand on it when you are talking with your sponsor, etc. Instead I wrote a novel that would rival some of the longest novels in modern history or make an unabridged dictionary look like a small magazine. I got frustrated, stopped writing for months on end and got a resentment with the step about resentments. When I finally

finished it, because as the saying goes "when the pain gets great enough." So I took that into Step 5, and thought I was being slick by how I wrote it out. It turns out, I was following the AA Matrix for the Steps 4 and 5 without even realizing it. NA purists, if you have a problem with me mentioning the mothership, 1) call your sponsor, 2) call your sponsor and 3) call your sponsor, and ask me if I care because I don't.

So I wrote it out, had no problem admitting it to the God of my understanding and to myself, but to tell another person... During that time the sponsor I was working that step with, I still don't know what happened, and the long and short of it was that I did not trust him and I shared it with my attorney. I did "share it" with that sponsor, but the PG version. Needless to say I changed sponsors a short time later. When I changed sponsors, I spilled my guts, telling him everything and there are things he shared with me that died on that day. Hence the word integrity. There was a major gift of freedom that came from that experience. It really started to solidify my faith in the God of my understanding, things started to really change for me at that point. I still had to get through that Step 6 that nobody had warned me about.

Step 6. Yeah, that one was a bit of a b\*\*\* to say the least. See I worked Step 4 as a blame thrower, but was just beginning to start to see my part in all of it. This small part I saw then was really revealed to me in Step 5.

Then there was Step 6, which hit me like a freight train. I was exposed to all of my defects of character. I was forced to get honest and take a legitimate look how I operated. Yes I did see those things in the preceding steps; however, it was Step 6 that really put a name to it. For me, it was like the first time I admitted I was an addict and that I was powerless of my disease. I also followed the same pattern for writing this step as I did in Step 5, which made things much easier. Here is a suggestion: if you are reading this and get stuck on naming defects of character, Google search it. A fellow member in recovery, in AA, has a wonderful blog on the defects of character with great definitions. I used it as a starting point. Yes some are redundant, but I need that repetition to really understand stuff. I am a stubborn evil genius sometimes. See, the faith that really started to develop after working Step 5 is what got me through Step 6. I also did not waste time working this step. It is an action step and I just wanted relief. After working Step 6, I was given another dose of awareness, seeing myself for who I really am, the motivating factors behind those actions and how I have previously acted on them. In having the awareness, it is now my duty to God to not act out on those defects of character to the best of my ability, i.e., staying in God's will vs. my will. See Step 7 in a following edition of Clean Times for more details about that. I love ya Funcoast!

**Tradition 5. "Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."**

**Tradition 6. "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."**

A lot of my information comes from the new literature, Guiding Principles The Spirit of Our Traditions.

"Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."

Instead of chasing empty goals, today we are driven by a sense of purpose. Gratitude in action is an engine for change: as we carry the message, our own lives transform.

Our message is the heart of NA: everything we do everything that matters to us as a fellowship comes back to a simple message of hope and freedom, that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs lose the desire to use and find a new way of life. No one is too sick or too well too rich or too poor too far gone are too far away to qualify; it is available to us all.

We carry the message not the addict, but if you are new you can carry an addict to the message. Our literature says that carrying the message is what matters. We see it in our meetings when an empty room is transformed into an atmosphere of warmth and empathy. We see it when Continued on page 2

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members generously give of their time and themselves to serve. We see it when we set aside our personal differences or interests to reach out to a suffering addict. Many of us, in moments of distress, have been told to go help somebody. Reaching out breaks the bond of self-obsession and frees us to see ourselves and our whole world from a new perspective. In our hope for each other, we find hope for ourselves.

When we come to this tradition as individual members, our first task is to consider our personal role in helping each group to fulfill its primary purpose. When we live the program, read the literature, listen to the readings, practice these principles and apply our traditions, we really don't have to worry too much about our message. Our recovery will speak for itself, each of us carries a message. We are always examples of recovery in action, whether we mean to be or not. People look to our actions to understand how Narcotic Anonymous works. We pay attention to our own relationships with the addict who still suffers: Do we welcome newcomers at our meeting? Are we respectful and compassionate? Are we providing the new member with a safe place to recover? When an addict seeks recovery in Narcotics Anonymous we have an obligation to reach out.

"Tradition 6: 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."

Tradition 6 teaches us to be true to ourselves. The sixth tradition explains why the NA message must be clear. If we are to keep from being diverted, we must know what our purpose is. We can't just sort of know; we must be certain. We have a message and our purpose is to carry it. Anything else is a distraction or a diversion. Distractions steal our attention and diversion, our energy, and both take away from what

matters to us. Addiction painfully diverted us from our hopes and dreams. Tradition 6 suggests that the things most likely to divert us now as groups and as individuals seem like they could benefit us but will betray us in the long run. Even if we are not vigilant about our message, our autonomy and our principles from the beginning, we'll soon find that we must practice the twelve traditions in order to survive.

Although this tradition addresses itself to the groups, the issues it warns us about arise on a personal level too. Money, property and prestige can divert us because each of them can be used to feed self-centeredness. This tradition points us to the very personal investment each of us has in our groups and in our fellowship.

There is an enormous difference between lending our own name as individuals and lending the name of Narcotics Anonymous. If we are participating in public forums on social media, we consider how our various interests and affiliations are presented to the public. It's useful to remember that others may not be able to distinguish between member's personal beliefs and the principles of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. Practicing awareness goes a long way towards protecting our integrity. We may not notice that our behavior carries a message, but in fact our actions speak loud and clear. When we wear or carry the NA name, we endorse NA and we also suggest that NA endorses us. There is no way for someone unfamiliar with our program to understand the protection of principles of anonymity offers both members and the fellowship as a whole.

-William C.

## Ask An Addict What is group conscience and how does it come about?

### Basic text, 6th edition

"There is often a vast difference between group conscience and group opinion, as dictated by powerful personalities or popularity. Some of our most painful growing experiences have come as a result of decisions made in the name of group conscience. True spiritual principles are never in conflict; they complement each other. The spiritual conscience of a group will never contradict any of our Traditions" (p. 64)

### It Works, How, and Why

"The principle of anonymity lies at the core of our fellowship's understanding of group conscience. The ideas of each individual group member have their importance, but the group takes its guidance from the collective conscience of all its members. Before the group makes a decision, its members consult their Higher Power, seeking spiritual guidance on the matter at hand. Their individual voices humbly join in developing a collective sense of God's will for the group, and a strong common voice arises out of that mix to guide us all. We call this group conscience." (p. 210)

"Group conscience can be thought of in the same way as personal conscience. Group conscience reflects a collective awareness of, understanding of, and surrender to spiritual principles. The conscience of a group takes shape and is revealed when its members take the time to talk with each other about their personal needs, the needs of the group, and the needs of NA as a whole. ... In developing a group conscience a clear mutual understanding or consensus arises. Based upon the understanding gained by sharing group conscience, a group may move on to a vote in order to make decisions. In the best of circumstances, however, the group continues discussion until it reaches unanimity." (p. 136)

### Just for Today

"Group conscience is one of the most important principles in service. It is vital to remember that the group conscience is what counts, not just our individual beliefs and desires. We lend our thoughts and beliefs to the development of a group conscience. Then when that conscience arises, we accept its guidance. The key is working with others, not against them." (p. 186)

# 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

## Welcoming the Newcomer

At every meeting, we read how the newcomer is the MOST important person in the room because we can “only keep what we have by giving it away.”

But how does this actually stand up in practice, not just in theory? Depending on who you speak with, you will hear “they were welcomed” or “they were not welcomed.” Either way, the newcomer is welcomed or they are not.

My Journey: At one point of being in the rooms, I begin to notice that people were not friendly, supportive or interested in what I was as a newcomer. There were a number of people, of both genders, that would ALWAYS state, “To have a friend, you must be a friend.” For some reason, this quote always stuck in my craw. For some reason, it did not make sense. It did not fit the situation I was experiencing. Then one day, after being involved with NA for 18 months and having two sponsors crash and burn, I was meditating and the phrase, “To have a friend, you must be a friend,” repeated word to mind. Then the reason why it never sat well with me.....I was never welcomed.

Later, over a period of time, it was shared with me that many of the women thought I was stuck up and arrogant. So, women with 5, 10, 15 plus years had looked at me and decided that I was too good to be in NA. (Are you following this?)

A newcomer does NOT come into the rooms with a program. A newcomer does not come into the rooms as if they were attending a social club. The newcomer comes into the rooms after having to admit defeat. After having to admit that they do not have it all together and had failed. The guilt, the shame, the self-rejection, and they are then expected to create their own program out of the thin air. Create their own program by reading, attending meetings and piecing together a program to the best of their ability.

In the words of one old-timer, “If the people with recovery and time, do not reach out to the newcomer, then what is the newcomer to do? Drown?”

There will always be people who do not apply spiritual principles or work a full program that includes welcoming the newcomer, but for those who know the importance, continue to reach out and welcome the newcomer.

Pink C.

## GROUP NAME AND FORMAT CHANGE

The Old-timers Group held on Sundays in Brandon from 1:00 until 2:30 PM will be changing the group name and format beginning on Sunday, June 4, 2017.

The New group name will be:



### For the Newcomer

Location:  
St. Andrews Church  
3315 Bryan Rd.,  
Brandon FL 33511,  
near the corner of  
Bloomindgale

Open Meeting Format  
Newcomer Panel  
Question and Answer  
(I.P.) Informational  
Pamphlets

## 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

# Upcoming Events & Info

A New Way  
Mike H. 4/21/03 14 years  
Mike S. 4/22/01 16 years  
Steve F. 4/23/06 11 years  
Art B. 5/12/97 20 years  
Glen G. 5/14/89 28 years

#### Arc of Hope

Barry H. 5/1/14 3 years

#### Brandon at Noon

Mike H. 5/1/14 3 years  
Charlene D. 6/2/11 6 years  
Jon C. 6/3/15 2 years  
Kyle C. 6/12/12 5 years  
Lisa S. 6/24/12 5 years  
Steven F. 7/5/14 3 years  
Leala T. 7/20/16 1 year  
Emily C. 8/22/10 7 years  
Wendy J. 8/9/14 3 years

#### Free to be Me

Meridith B. 4/29/11 6 years  
Barry H. 5/1/14 3 years  
Deborah N. 5/2/06 11 years  
Ryan M. 6/23/16 1 year  
Aloha B. 7/5/05 12 years

#### Grow or Go

Amy M. 6/4/2013 4 years  
Robert A. 6/8/2005 12 years  
Kirk K. 6/14/1988 29 years  
Derek B. 6/22/2012 5 years  
Andy C. 6/25/2012 5 years

#### Heights of NA

Frank M. 6/1/11 6 years  
Robert A. 6/8/05 12 years

#### High Lie

Jill M. 5/13/11 6 years  
Pete M. 5/2/95 22 years  
Carl C. 5/22/11 6 years  
Heather L. 5/23/13 4 years  
Craig C. 7/23/03 14 years  
Mary S. 7/29/08 9 years  
John Y. 8/8/88 29 years  
Jason B. 8/8/05 12 years

#### Hyde Park NA 1 & 2

Jenn S. 4/18/14 3 years  
Bob H. 4/26/96 21 years  
Lauren C. 5/23/14 3 years

#### In the Middle

Mike G. 7/23/09 8 years

#### Monday Meditation

Mike H. 5/7/14 3 years  
Lisa D. 5/21/11 6 years  
Ashley M. 6/1/13 4 years  
Savannah D. 6/6/11 6 years

#### New Bite of Serenity

Melissa J. 4/23/16 1 year  
Lisa I. 4/23/12 5 years  
Joyce J. 5/16/12 5 years  
Steve C. 6/10/95 22 years  
Wade W. 6/21/10 7 years  
Valencia N. 6/24/12 5 years  
Barbara R. 6/24/15 2 years  
Belynda N. 7/4/00 17 years

#### New Life

Myra C. 3/17/11 6 years  
Evelyn A. 3/28/89 28 years  
Bertha B. 4/27/07 10 years  
Carole K. 5/20/86 31 years  
Marlon R. 5/22/06 11 years

#### New Tampa NA

Celia G. 5/30/15 2 years

#### Radical Recovery

Raymond 6/5/06 11 years  
Debbie E. 6/5/13 4 years

#### Recovery in Riverview

Estelle S. 5/6/12 5 years  
Carol B. 6/7/04 15 years  
Jessica P. 6/20/15 2 years

#### Recovery in the Hood

Richard W. 6/18/97 20 years

#### Renegade Recovery

Murray B. 7/16/16 1 year  
Juan J. 7/30/16 1 year  
Charles T. 8/5/03 4 years  
Enrique R. 8/13/99 18 years

#### Stepping Up

Brenda B. 2/24/05 12 years  
Calvin A. 4/11/10 7 years  
Michael J. 5/1/99 18 years  
Renee C. 5/5/88 29 years  
Robert I. 6/28/11 6 years

#### Sunset Solutions

Graig K. 6/14/89 28 years  
Frank V. 6/21/88 29 years

#### Tampa Unity Group

Frank P. 6/15/08

#### The Workshop

Jill M. 5/9/07 10 years

#### Together We Can

Mario F. 4/24/10 7 years  
Romano 5/3/12 5 years  
Lillian C. 5/18/94 23 years  
Leonora M. 6/10/02 15 years

#### Triple "M" Group

Frederick "Boo" L. 6/5/08 9 years

#### Women of Serenity

Honoree 6/4/16 1 year

#### Women's Hope

Cynthia B. 2/5/16 1 year  
Victoria M. 2/26/16 1 year  
Kim H. 3/17/16 1 year  
Felicia S. 4/5/06 11 years  
Stacey S. 4/21/16 1 year  
Lisa F. 4/28/15 2 years  
Cat P. 5/17/12 5 years

## Life on Life's Terms

Presents

Ep!c Bowling

When: June 14, 2017 @ 8pm – 10pm  
(The meetings will start at 6:00 and end at 7:30)

Where: Brandon Crossroads Bowl, 609  
Crater Lane Tampa FL 33619

Tickets are on sale for \$10  
NO ADDICT TURNED AWAY

## 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://www.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.