



the heartbeat

“The heart of NA beats when two addicts share their recovery”

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ACCEPTANCE IS THE ANSWER

I am a pre-operative transsexual. I'm now 50 years old, and for the majority of my life (since age 12) got loaded because of my sexual orientation. You see, I didn't like myself. I was born with 60% female chromosomes and started having breast development at age 12. After all the sessions with psychoanalyst's, psychologists, and psychiatrists, I never really realize why I looked so much like a girl. It took the analysis of a DNA clinic for me to come to the shocking revelation of whom and what I really am. Although being receptive to the clinical facts that were conveyed to me, I couldn't accept it; because I love women. My sexual preference is women, and I always kept a pretty female lover. Although I've come to understand that my genitalia don't define my gender, I also have come to accept my life as it is. People such as me commonly referred to as "transgender", usually don't come to the rooms of NA they're usually are seen on the corners somewhere in Hollywood, CA or in some night club lip-singing or on some professional's coach, telling all their troubles away.

Through NA and the process of recovery, I have learned to be butt-naked honest, and no longer seek other people's approval or acceptance of who or what I am. I can hold my head up with dignity, decorum, and respect, knowing that I don't have to be judgmental about myself. I know that I stand out at meetings, and people come up to me & tell me how attractive I am, and that I am beautiful. I realize that probably the whole Greater Los Angeles area fellowship knows that I'm powerless over it. I find acceptance in the fact that, at least I'm honest and willing to set aside any secrets because I know my life is an open book. I have a open-mind to the therapeutic aspect of another's sharing of the experience, strength, and hope that gives me the strength to stay clean and not get loaded behind me—just being me.

Debrina P.

Remember the day before you got clean?

How sad it would be to forget that day. I just celebrated twenty years clean, and over the years I have seen many people forget. Friends, sponsees, and sponsors all have forgotten what that last day of using was like. But every time I hear a newcomer, every time I hear someone share that day, I remember.

It was an awful mix of hopelessness, despair, pain, and disease called active addiction. No future there, just going around in ever-decreasing circles with bigger bangs depending on the drug. I was standing at a crossroad. I wanted bigger, more powerful drugs to take away the pain, because the ones I was using had stopped working for me.

I was standing at a crossroad, but I did not know this at the time. I prayed for help to a God I did not understand. God brought me to NA before I even knew I was an addict. I was twenty-three and spiritually and emotionally bankrupt. I knew that what awaited me on the road of active addiction were insanity and a horrible, grey, hopeless life. I was too much of a coward to live a wild life. I lived in the shadows, in fear, in denial, in the dark. I ran away—I did not do, I did not have, and I did not talk. I sat in a room by myself, living in psychedelic fantasies. I had no life; my addiction had brought me to a standstill.

And God brought me to NA—a God of hope and love, a loving, caring God that I did not understand. This was not the judgmental, intolerant, cruel, woman-hating God I had grown up with. I left that one at the door of my first meeting. He did not belong in NA.

The God I do not understand does not mind if I say God and # &*% in the same sentence. The God I do not understand has never denied me hope, has never shamed me, has never told me to leave until I can behave better. This God is unbelievably patient and tolerant, and loves all my darkness as well as my light. I know this because NA has taught me this. For me, as much as God is love, NA is hope.

I remember my first day clean. I was given an incredible gift—a profound moment of clarity in which I knew that, just for today, this was the only way for me. I do not believe I have another recovery in me. I do not believe I could find that courage again. But I also have no doubt that I could use again.

So, I have no choice: Whatever it takes to not pick up is the only option open to me.

I continue to go to meetings to hear that newcomer who has just crawled across the threshold. It has not changed. out there. The stories change, the drugs change, and the fine details change, but as soon as they tell me how they feel, I remember that despair, that loneliness, and that hopelessness that so characterized the life of active addiction.

I was sitting in a meeting the other day next to a twenty-one-year-old who was eight days clean. She was so grateful to NA for being there. I was so grateful to God for helping her there. Without her, I would forget. What a sad day it would be to forget my last day of using...



Surrender and Hope

I tried my way for many years,

Knowing that the program works in spite of my fears.

Went to lots of meetings in the beginning and ended with a few,

And always did what I wanted to do.

His or her suggestions were giving to me,

I was deaf to the information and principals I couldn't see,

My anger kept me locked inside my own mind,

Instead of moving forward my brain was on rewind.

Trapped by the bugaboos of my past,

Uncomfortability on my inside kept me running fast.

My guilt, shame, and infidelity kept my life on pause,

While my disease cheered me on with an insidious applause.

Resentment, low self-worth, and unforgiveness were the captains of my ship,

Used by my disease to plan my chaotic trips.

Whooped into submission I finally gave in,

To live this program I can no longer pretend.

With help from God, my sponsor and NA friends,

This terrible cycle can come to an end.

Although before it's been hard to cope,

But with surrender and willingness I know for me, there's hope.

Winton H.

My Journey

**My life has been a journey
Some good and some bad;**

**My life has been a journey
A journey I'm truly blessed I had;**

**For if this journey I had not taken
Many things may not be;**

**The knowledge of life I've acquired
Which has allowed me to see;**

**The person I was and the things I've done
Can obviously no longer be;**

**My life has been a journey
Both near and far away;**

**The roads I've taken on this journey
Has lead me here today;**

**The map I chose to follow I will not pass it on;
For the map was made to keep me weak
But instead it has made me strong;**

**My life has been a journey
But this journey must come to an end;
Because I've chosen to follow a new map
And now my new journey must begin.**

Diana H

THE NEXT RIGHT THING

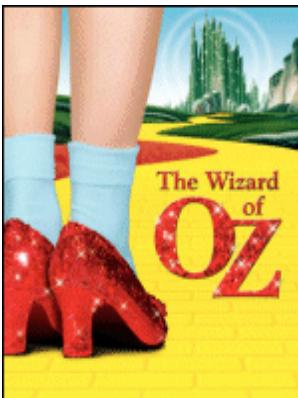
In my life came destruction and despair. I asked myself why this was happening to me. Did I deserve this? With no answer coming to mind, I did what, for me, was the next right thing: use more drugs to escape that thought.



Escaping deeper and deeper into that life of destruction and despair seemed the only answer for me. I was used to this way of living. My life reached a point of total chaos. Then, a friend wanted to introduce me to a new kind of drug. I'm not really sure what happened, but I decided to run from that life.

Not sure of what to do, the next right thing came my way. I ran into the doors of Narcotics Anonymous in search of an "answer". I found my answer and it still works for me. The people whom I first met in NA told me to keep coming back, and I have. That's what it took for me and now I lead a clean and satisfying life.

Debbie G.



Sitting, reflecting on the past, childhood memories drift in and out. An old song from camp days comes to mind about "Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!" And for a moment I dwell in that happy memory of carefree summers. The memory is all too short. As was that carefree and happy time of life. I drift into the present and become aware of where I am when I hear someone reading words of being "in the grip of a continuous and progressive illness whose ends are all the same: Jails, Institutions and Death." (Basic Text p. 3) And then again those words ring out in unison "Oh, My!"

Maybe I am rigid, and N.A. purist (whatever that may be) but I am offended. Maybe I should just lighten up and enjoy the party but my experience tells me differently.

I drift back into memory, far removed from those carefree days to another summer day when through no fault of my own (or so I thought) the flashing lights in the mirror were for me. I moaned and wondered why they chose me, me of no fault, to stop on that fine sunny day. They wouldn't listen to my reasons and as the steel door closed behind me the thought "Oh, my!" was not on my mind. Before arraignment I thought "Oh, my god!" over and over but not "Oh, my!" Not then or on any of the other occasions of being locked up.

The disease continues and progresses, bottoms are reached then the bottom falls out and desperation gets deeper. Insanity progresses but in brief moments of clarity I begin to see that I may have a problem and that, just maybe, it can be fixed by the right doctor or the right medication. I check in to the hospital, the doors close and lock behind me. "What have I done" Oh, my god!" but not "Oh, my!" The diagnosis an "incurable disease", but it can be arrested and recovery is possible. There is hope, but I'm told that my "Oh, my!" attitude is part of the problem.

But still the disease goes on, in me and in those around me, powerful, progressive, and incurable. I learn relapse is a reality, not an accident of recovery, or a failure of the program, or a requirement to move on to some new level of step work, but a choice made by some of us with too great a regularity. The result is that too many of my family in recovery don't come back, no longer in jail, no more treatment. They are simply dead. "Oh, my!"

Anonymous



1 YEAR

Lisa G 2/25/08
 April R 2/21/08
 Freddie H 2/18/08
 Sam S 2/14/08
 Ronnie P 2/12/08
 Tony S 2/06/08
 Lionel J 1/13/08
 Darryl H 1/12/08
 Herman R 1/11/08
 Pam K 1/09/08

2 YEARS

Tyra M 2/24/07
 James E 2/14/07
 Leslie L 2/02/07
 Merlin C 2/01/07
 Wesley M 1/27/07
 Lisa G 2/25/07
 Tyra M 1/24/07
 Mark T 1/22/07
 Donell P 1/21/07
 Emmitt L 1/17/07
 Darren P 1/11/07
 Rashid M 1/06/07

3 YEARS

Edris H 2/19/06
 Cynthia M 2/13/06
 Patricia T 2/11/06
 Tina W 2/08/06
 Lloyd W 1/31/06
 Keica D 1/31/06
 Solomon W 1/31/06
 Trisha G 1/29/06
 Donald G 1/10/06
 Cameron H 1/08/06
 Don M 1/06/06

4 YEARS

Fredrick M 2/25/05
 Donald C 2/23/05
 Lorris J 2/23/05
 Terri M 2/08/05
 Keith R 2/08/05
 Daryl W 2/02/05
 Isaias A 2/02/05
 Patrice G 1/23/05
 Clyde B 1/15/05
 Garnel C 1/12/05
 April B 1/12/05
 Linda M 1/10/05
 Randall P 1/01/05

5 YEARS

Armond G 2/17/04
 Ronda B 2/24/04
 Theresa A 2/08/04
 Terry N 2/08/04
 Sharon B 1/31/04
 Gary M 1/27/04

6 YEARS

Anthony M 1/23/04
 Darryl H 1/21/04
 Tyra M 1/20/04
 Samuel L 1/16/04
 Denise L 1/07/04
 Rodney N 1/01/04

Maria G 2/07/03
 Henry H 2/04/03
 Patrice S 1/29/03
 Patricia F 1/19/03
 Javier C 1/17/03
 Eric H 1/15/03
 Frank T 1/15/03

Brenda G 1/13/03
 Eddie B 1/06/03

7 YEARS

Taylor L 2/28/02
 Marsha E 2/26/02
 Marsha E 2/25/02
 Oscar W 2/20/02
 Rosa S 2/18/02
 Tobias R 2/11/02
 Ennis B 2/13/02
 Leticia A 2/05/02
 Melissa H 1/29/02
 Charles B 1/25/02
 Raheem R 1/23/02
 Sheila H 1/19/02
 Yvonne E 1/18/02

8 YEARS

Melvin G 2/26/01
 Carmen D 2/24/01
 Ernie W 2/14/01
 Hillary P 2/12/01
 Claudia E 2/05/01
 Stanley W 2/05/01
 Andre M 2/02/01
 David W 1/24/01
 Debra D 1/24/01
 Pam M 1/19/01
 Sabrina S 1/18/01
 Linda R 1/17/01

9 YEARS

Antoinette D 2/19/00
 Juan Carlos 2/19/00
 Bea Z 2/16/00
 Yvette J 2/10/00
 Birdsong P 2/10/00
 Robert T 2/10/00
 Lee Mc 2/04/00
 Sandra R 1/27/00
 Alexander S 1/11/00
 Ronald T 1/09/00

10 YEARS

Leah T 2/27/99
 Carmen D 2/24/99
 Carri M 2/19/99
 Robert T 2/10/99
 Rhonda J 2/09/99
 James G 2/09/99
 Mia 1/31/99
 Elevelyn J 1/25/99
 Colin C 1/20/99
 Carolyn B 1/15/99
 Jim G 1/11/99
 Debra H 1/08/99
 Veronica M 1/06/99
 Marc N 1/04/99
 Linda B.K 1/04/99
 Carolyn B 1/03/99
 Orlando W 1/03/99

11 YEARS

Tommy S 2/10/98
 Claudia M. 2/07/98
 Bo H 2/05/98
 Lewis H. 2/02/98
 Gwen B 2/18/98
 Freddie H 2/18/98
 Shelly J 2/12/98
 Camilla D 1/26/98
 James L. 1/24/98
 Tammy I. 1/23/98
 Brenda J. 1/21/98
 Lorna M. 1/20/98
 Dwight N 1/14/98
 Kenneth B. 1/16/98
 Marva P. 1/09/98
 Anthony T 1/08/98
 Patrick J. 1/05/98
 Sherry M 1/01/98

12 YEARS

Carl J. 2/26/97
 George T. 2/21/97
 Daniel R. 2/15/97
 Michael P. 2/12/97
 Maggie B. 2/12/97
 John F. 2/11/97
 Cece F. 2/11/97
 Lawrence I 2/09/97
 Troy R. 2/07/97
 Martha S. 2/03/97
 Gerald T. 1/18/97
 Yolanda M 1/14/97
 Kevin B. 1/12/97
 Joseph B 1/02/97

13 YEARS

James H. 2/29/96
 Anthony W 2/27/96
 Nate T. 2/21/96
 Luis S. 2/13/96
 Margo M. 2/03/96
 Jerry B 2/02/96

14 YEARS

Rod P. 1/13/96
 Albert T. 1/08/96
 Lisa D. 1/03/96
 Karen S. 1/02/96

Earl L 2/28/95
 Karen A. 2/03/95
 Sheila K. 1/31/95
 Frank S. 1/24/95
 Dan O 1/22/95
 Sharron S 1/10/95

15 YEARS

Johnny B 2/21/94
 Henry C. 2/13/94
 Aaron A. 2/11/94
 Sophia H 2/10/94
 Robert E. 1/09/94
 Sherry B. 1/03/94
 Eleanor P. 1/02/94

16 YEARS

Lynette P. 2/19/93
 Donald B 1/19/93
 Dwayne P 1/15/93
 Lisa H 1/11/93
 Andrew R. 1/05/93
 Shelly W. 1/04/93

Lisa G. 1/22/92
 Melissa P. 1/22/92
 Toni B. 1/14/92
 Darryl J 1/13/92
 Akbar 1/08/92
 Yolanda J 1/03/92

17 YEARS

Kim M 1/20/91
 Veronica S 1/17/91
 Everett G 1/14/91

18 YEARS

Faheem P. 1/05/90

Gary J. 2/23/89

Leonard L. 2/25/88
 Yolanda F. 2/23/88
 Lester L. 2/15/88
 Rodney C 2/11/88
 Veronica L. 1/19/88
 Tracy D. 1/21/88

19 YEARS

Todd K. 2/17/87
 Mitzi W. 1/31/87
 Henry B. 1/13/87

20 YEARS

Ricardo M 2/25/86
 Tyrone B. 1/24/86

21 YEARS

Clarence W. 2/04/83

22 YEARS

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Share the Wealth

the **heartbeat** presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The articles you see in this newsletter are written by NA members like yourself. You need not consider yourself a skilled writer. You don't have to know all the rules of grammar. We have an editorial team whose job it is to take care of those details. What we need is your unique perspective on the NA program. Without it, we don't have a message to carry. The articles and letters do not necessarily express the philosophy of NA as a whole nor does publication imply endorsement by NA, **the heartbeat**, or the Greater Los Angeles Area of Narcotics Anonymous. **the heartbeat** assumes no responsibility to return submitted material and does not guarantee that submissions will be published. **the heartbeat** reserves the right to edit any material submitted in accordance with our review policy. The policy includes but not limited to:

- Articles should be no longer than one page handwritten or typed.
- Use of NA language of recovery.
- No profanity.
- No personal attacks directed towards NA members or NA as a whole.

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