



the heartbeat

"The heart of NA beats when two addicts share their recovery"

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The Effect of Words

Today I am learning to be careful with what I say. Our fellowship has been teaching me the importance of watching my words. I remember my first few years in the fellowship. I would often hear people share from the podium, denouncing their significant others and belittling each other. I would wonder what happened to the responsibility of owning up to our part!! The steps, along with so many of you have taught, and are teaching me to own up to my part.

Over the years I have also heard many who always edify their significant other and only share the part they play in it. I thank you for that!! That is where I have gained my strength and it is teaching me to grow!

I remember trying to change my wife's mood as well as my own one day when she was really upset with me (some years back). Although I was really pissed at the time, I went out and bought her this nice plant and picked out a very lovely card which described all the nice things I really felt about her. To my surprise later that evening I found her smiling and was awarded with some special surprises!!

I remember realizing that this stuff really works. Thank you my predecessors!!

Vaughn H

G.L.A.A.N.A. Convention

The Gift of Recovery VI

JULY 20,21,22, 2012

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DEALING WITH DENIAL

Being in recovery for a long period of time sometimes gets sort of boring and repetitious. It sometimes even gets to the point where you begin to question even why you are staying clean, or better yet, after all this clean time, why am I still practicing the same steps and traditions that I was introduced to when I first got clean. It is at point that I question my denial, about the belief system that I have incorporated in my life.

I can remember when I was first introduced to Narcotics Anonymous some twenty four years ago. I was brand new and real excited about being clean. I was in a treatment facility that dealt with drug problems. I didn't at the time know that alcohol was a drug. I was admitted into this program only after I said that I had a drug problem. I really thought that I had a cocaine problem and that they were going to find a way to relieve my obsession to stop smoking crack.

I thank God that I stayed in that program long enough to realize that I had a living problem, I didn't know the first thing about living life on life's terms, and all I did know was subject to revision. It was this realization that has convinced me that I am an addict and I need other addicts to help me stay in the "just for today" concept of recovery.

I must never forget that complacency is an ally of denial and that if I let up or even think that I don't need to work the steps anymore I am surely setting myself up for a relapse or better yet the real possibility of jails institution or death

In closing I have something that I want to pass on to the newcomer or for anyone who may be in denial with this disease. We are dealing with the most vicious most ruthless, most conniving trickiest demon on this planet whose primary mission is to have you buy the lie, that you aren't an addict. It will have you looking at all the differences instead of the similarities so you will have that one more excuse to devastate your life. If you be new just remember that recovery is not a race, it's a program designed for you to go at your pace not anyone else's. Peace out.

William S staying clean forever

Living The Steps

"When we work the program, we live the steps daily. This gives us experience in applying spiritual principles. The experience that we gain with time helps our ongoing recovery. We must use what we learn or we will lose it, no matter how long we have been clean." Basic Text pp. 81-82



When I first came into Narcotics Anonymous, I was told over and over "Work the steps, work the steps". People shared in meetings about how many times they had worked the steps. I was told that I needed to work the steps as soon as possible. It seemed as if answering the questions and writing all this stuff on paper was going to be the "quick fix" I needed to get my life back in order.

Well, actually I was partially right. First of all, working the steps is vitally important to recovery, and that is not just my opinion. "How It Works" in the Basic Text states: "If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are the principles that made our recovery possible." The steps are indeed an integral part of recovery. After all, that is how I learn to recover.

Secondly, writing the steps down on paper is also a very important part of the process for me. I can think that I'm powerless or that I've surrendered as much as I want to, but once I have the cold, hard facts staring me back in the face in black and white, then that's the time to get honest. Writing it down on paper also allows me to go through the process, whether it's turning over a character defect or looking at my part in something from my past, so that I can get to where I'm supposed to be.

The steps are not a "quick fix", however. Indeed, there are no "quick fixes" in recovery. Recovery is as fast or slow as I make

it, and it is a process. I will never do it perfectly. But, as long as I can say that, today I did it to the best of my ability, then I'm doing okay. That, then, is the true point when recovery really begins.

I work the steps in order to learn how to live the steps, "to practice these principles understanding and application that they work." I must first understand the spiritual principles that reside in each and every one of these steps: honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, faith, anonymity, to name just a few. It is only then, once I have begun to understand these principles, that I can begin to implement them in my life. Then I truly begin to live the steps, and not only am I blessed by doing so, but I also become an example for others of what this program can really do. I must learn to live the steps on a daily basis. My recovery depends on it. Because, as the Basic Text points out, if I don't, I will lose it.

Anonymous



SPONSORSHIP

I got clean in 1983, did my steps right away, thoroughly and with a sponsor. I have been surprised in the last 10 years or so of my recovery to find so many people offering others advice and derisive comments about working steps "too fast" (whatever the hell that is) - the steps and the principles therein apply throughout the entire rest of my life and recovery, they can



certainly be worked again (and have been, many times, in my case). If a sponsor wants a sponsee to work their steps more slowly - that's between them - however, I have had many sponsees jumped on and told they were doing the steps "wrong" by random recovering addicts at meetings because they were working them within their first few months of recovery. It seems there was a big shift in NA regarding step work over the last decade or so with a belief that people can afford to take their time with the steps.

One thing I have noticed is that many people I've met who are new to recovery tend to have a lot of enthusiasm and willingness when they are fresh from using and have that gratitude shining in their entire being. That can be some incredible fuel to motivate someone to do steps - most of them don't really even need the extra push at that point - they want to do them. I would hate to let the opportunity pass. We can always work through the steps again going forward.

One girl in my area showed me a huge binder which contained her fourth step, with index tabs for categories, which she'd been working on for 8 years at that point. She is still lean (over 15 years clean now) so I can't fault her for working her program in a way that benefited her, but I can't imagine suggesting someone take 8 years to work a 4th step. I need to offer my own experience, which is that I have stayed clean over 26 years and I worked the steps immediately, and worked them again and again and again. When the step guide came out, I started working the steps in the guide, since I thought it might be a useful tool and future sponsees most likely would be hoping to work steps in it. I didn't want to guide them through the guide without having experience with it myself and I didn't want to be close-minded about it if it could be helpful in any way. A few years ago I didn't have the obligations I have no (work, etc.) and would spend hours on each step, in person, with sponsees, using the guide. We worked a lot of them right there together, question by question. It gave them one-on onetime with me, helped us get to know each other more intimately, and as patterns emerged, they were easy to identify because we were working step after step on a regular basis. It took around 3 months doing it that way.

Equipped For Surrender



When the pain of remaining the same is too great, then we change. This has been my Modus Operandi all throughout my lifetime. One problem for me here is my so-called high tolerance for pain. Due to the ability to jump directly into denial the moment pain is forthcoming. My disease has taught me to bury my natural (God Centered) feelings. This allows all my negative behaviors to be easily justified away and forgotten about.

Hidden from my conscious state. My conscience isn't a strong suit when I'm caught-up. So, I'm sick as my secrets. Even in my recovery from time to time I'll refrain from seeing my reality for what it is. Being accustom to a false sense of security and the old familiar pain of self-deceit. The kind that is deep down and firmly engrained in my diseased fear-based being. I used to call this stuck on stupid. Thankfully, we have the Steps to unlock us from this prison of self! I'm my own worst enemy, yet in the end it's up to me to do the footwork. If I get humble, I become teachable and God and NA will help.

It always comes back to the H.O.W. of our program. It's all about being honest with self. Honesty supports me in and promotes my courage. Steps 1, 4, 7 and 10. Open-mindedness in 2, 5, 8 and 11. And Willingness in 3, 6, 9 and 12. There is a pattern here. I'm so grateful for our 3rd Tradition. It's the process of progress, not perfection.

Freedom isn't free. Recovery has a price, it demands our vigilance. (Relapse prevention.) Acceptance is one of my keys to help me in my freedom quest. When others show me the only way out is through. I can see clearly a pain shared, is a pain lessened and a better option. Others do accept me as I am. They love me despite my faults and imperfections. There truly isn't anything to hide from. I don't have to cut and run. Thank You.

In "Why Are We Here" it states, "After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people" and "The real miracle happens when you realize the need for drugs has in some way been lifted from you. You have stopped using and started to live". The beauty of our program is we realized we aren't alone in this suffering. Our literature goes on to show us in "What Can I Do" solutions to our diseased thinking. Hey, the door is open, there is hope, and there is a way out after all. We can stop using, learn to stay stopped and find a new way of life. I'm allowed to put the hammers down. I'm encouraged to take off the huge masks that barely fit on an over inflated head. I can face everything and recover.

Today I'm peaceful and serene. I'm not like the moth to the flame any longer. I'm just me, imperfect but totally free. N.A. Works! With a wonderful Sponsor, God's grace and N.A. tools I show-up for life equipped for Surrender. Service kept me coming back early in recovery and I see it still helps. Feeling part of is awesome. Being asked to speak or to sponsor is an honor today. All the hope I see in meetings and read in our literature still inspires me daily. Thank you family you're the best.

In Loving Service
Mike H.



1 YEAR
 Elizabeth E 1/25/11
 Araceli U 1/23/11
 Genesis H 1/17/11
 Lawrence H 1/16/11
 Tammy C 1/02/11
 Angelina C 1/02/11

2 YEARS
 Joe C 2/27/10
 Cara S 2/23/10
 Linus A 2/20/10
 Melonie A 2/10/10
 Darryl C 2/07/10
 Louie H 2/05/10
 Patricia W 2/04/10
 Ruben O 2/03/10
 Stephanie O 2/01/10
 Herschel C 2/01/10
 Michael S 1/28/10
 Cristian M 1/27/10
 Schonol C 1/05/10
 Cindy D 1/04/10
 Rasheedah W 1/02/10
 Miles 1/02/10
 Stephen M 1/02/10
 Warren H 1/02/10
 Rashid M 1/01/10

3 YEARS
 Raymond B 2/24/09
 Ramon D 2/22/09
 Gene D 2/19/09
 Alicia M 2/17/09
 Patricia L 2/16/09
 Lunesa W 2/12/09
 Debbie B 1/24/09
 Crystal Y 1/12/09
 Deborah S 1/09/09
 Tracy B 1/04/09
 Ron G 1/01/09

4 YEARS
 Lisa G 2/25/08
 April R 2/21/08
 Gene D 2/20/08
 Ronnie P 2/12/08
 Keith M 1/26/08
 Herman R 1/15/08
 Lionel J 1/13/08
 Pam C 1/09/08
 Gary W 1/04/08

5 YEARS
 James E 2/14/07
 Rick F 2/13/07
 Maurice C 2/11/07
 May S 2/05/07
 Leslie L 2/02/07
 Merlin C 2/01/07
 Wesley M 1/27/07
 John J 1/24/07
 Tyra M 1/24/07
 Mark T 1/22/07
 Conell P 1/21/07
 Emmitt L 1/17/07
 Darren P 1/11/07
 Rashid M 1/06/07
 Sandra S 1/05/07

6 YEARS
 Debra M 2/22/06
 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
Soloman W 1/31/06
 Keica D 1/31/06
 Trisha G 1/29/06
 Charles Y 1/11/06
 Don M 1/06/06

7 YEARS
 Fredrick M 2/25/05
 Donald C 2/23/05
 Lorris J 2/23/05
 Janet B 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

8 YEARS
 Armmond G 2/17/04
 Ronda B 2/24/04
 Theresa A 2/08/04
 Terry N 2/08/04
 Sharon B 1/31/04
 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

9 YEARS
 Shirley J 2/27/03
 Sandra D 2/15/03
 Ennis B 2/13/03
 Barbara G 2/07/03
 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

10 YEARS
 Taylor L 2/28/02
 Marsha E 2/25/02
 Oscar W 2/20/02
 Rosa S 2/18/02
 Tobias R 2/11/02
 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
 Fred W 1/08/02
 Debra S 1/06/02

11 YEARS
 Melvin G (last name addict) 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
 Don M 1/06/06

12 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
 Phillip B 2/10/00
 Lee Mc 2/04/00
 Sandra R 1/27/00
 Alexander S 1/11/00
 Ronald T 1/09/00

13 YEARS
 Leah T 2/27/99
 Mark C 2/24/99
 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 1/05/99
 Carolyn B 1/03/99
 Orlando W 1/03/99

14 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 L. 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

15 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
 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

16 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
Tabitha O 1/22/96
 Rod P. 1/13/96
Deborah F 1/11/96
 Albert T. 1/08/96
Lisa D. 1/03/96
 Karen S. 1/02/96

17 YEARS
 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

18 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

19 YEARS
 Lynette P. 2/19/93
 Regina H 1/25/93
 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

20 YEARS
 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

21 YEARS
 Leonard H. 1/23/91
 Kim M 1/20/91
 Veronica S 1/17/91
 Everett G 1/14/91

22 YEARS
 Bruce L 2/13/90
 Faheem P. 1/05/90

23 YEARS
 Gary J. 2/23/89

24 YEARS
 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

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

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

29 YEARS
 Clarence W. 2/04/83

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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