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The Greater Los Angeles Area of Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter



the heartbeat

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



Nov/Dec 2014

Twenty Years of Gratitude

"We keep what we have only with vigilance....."

My name is Rick and I'm an addict. My clean date is June 18, 1994 and it's only by the grace of God and living the Narcotics Anonymous program that I have stayed clean for two decades. When I first started this journey in 1994, in San Diego, I was thoroughly beaten by my addiction. I could not continue living under bridges and sleeping in Balboa Park. I had gone to treatment 3 times before, beginning in 1986, and although I knew all the clichés of the 12 step fellowships, I couldn't stop using. After getting clean this last time, the San Diego D.A.'s Office refiled charges for 13 narcotics offenses against me, from "Under the Influence" to "Possession of Paraphernalia". On April 10, 1994, Officer Stewart of the San Diego Police Department, who had stopped me previously, after relapsing, and warned me that if he saw me anywhere in a drug area that he would arrest me, did. Thank God for the Arresting Officer. After processing into Vietnam veterans of San Diego Rehabilitation Center on June 18th, I began a 28 day inpatient treatment at the VA Hospital in San Diego on June 21, 1994, and was greeted by my old nurse who promptly informed me, "You don't have 28 days to finish the first 3 steps as usual, you have exactly 14 days to complete them or I'm kicking you out!" Well, I finished those assignments in 1 week. That began a journey into the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous and the spiritual principles of Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness. After returning to treatment, my counselor told me "Rick, if you want to stay clean, you need to go to meetings where there are people who look like you, talk like you, and who used like you. Sit up front and listen." And I did. 20 years later I still sit up front and listen for the message, and not to the messenger.

Over the course of this journey, I have been married, graduated with honors from Springfield College with a B.A. in Psychology, got married, bought a brand new house, got fired from my job, started a new career, been divorced, filed bankruptcy, but did not ever get loaded. Thanks to the process of working the 12 steps, I have been able to live "Life on Life's terms" and continue to trust the process. I have had 3 different sponsors on this journey, but only one Grand Sponsor, Uncle Rob J. who was and still is a big inspiration to me in my recovery. Through my sponsors' and Grand sponsor's examples of how recovering addicts apply the principles of this program in their lives I have been given first-hand experience of what it means in the Basic Text when it says "We have never seen a person who lives the Narcotics Anonymous program relapse." My current sponsor lives in Las Vegas and we still work steps and talk to each other in a regular basis. I have been of service to each area that I have lived in since getting clean, whether it was the Southeast-Barrio Area (SDICRNA), South West Area (CIRNA), Southern Nevada Area (SNANA) and the GLAANA (Los Angeles) since I was 6 months clean. Service taught me the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts and how to not to give an opinion, but to just report the facts. My Grand Sponsor would always tell us "if you're not in a service position, then you're stealing from the program." He said it. I believe it. That does it. And 20 years later, being a Group Service Representative, I continue to appreciate that there are no Big "I's" or little "U's" in Narcotics Anonymous. All in all, I would not trade this journey I've been on in the last 20 years for anything. When I look back on how deep the hole was that I crawled out of on June 18, 1994, and where the spiritual principles of Honesty, Open-mindedness and Willingness have brought me to, I can't help but to "give back what was so freely given to me!"

Thank you, Narcotics Anonymous!

Rick S. 06/18/94

The Greater Los Angeles Area 23RD Area Anniversary



LAX Hilton
5711 W Century Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Foundation First

*"As we begin to function in society, our creative freedom
helps us sort our priorities and do the basic things first."*

Dinner: 6PM Meeting: 7PM Dance: 9:30PM-12:30AM Donation: \$25.00
Dance only: \$7.00

Saturday November 22, 2014

For further information contact:
Vanessa 310.386.9032 Mignon 323.309.6394 Barry 323.839.2979

"I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom."

--BOB DYLAN



The Recent Manifestation Of My Disease



My name is Paul, and yes I am an addict. I decided to write this short story, and submit it to the N.A. newsletter, at the request of my sponsor. Like many of my fellow addicts, cocaine was always my drug of choice. Now that I'm drug-free, working a program, and approaching my two-year birthday in Narcotics Anonymous, God decided to show me something about myself that I didn't know.

He showed me, how my addiction can manifest itself in other areas of my life. Of course, I know I can't drink alcohol, and I don't. I know I can't spend all my money on prostitutes, and I don't. I know I REALLY can't smoke rocks, and I don't. However, I didn't see anything wrong with playing Five Card Hold-em, for money, at Hollywood Park Casino whenever I wanted to. I would limit myself to \$40 cash, every time I played. (SELF WILL RUNNING WILD). I would tell myself each time that I went..."This is my treat time. My reward for being obedient to God, myself and N.A." I would justify gambling, to God, my partner, my sponsor, and myself, every time I did it. I even put many safeguards or barriers in place. For example, I started leaving my ATM card at home; I would quit when I was up \$200 dollars and go home. (THIS WAS A RARE OCCASION). I would limit myself to once a month. I would pray over the card table. I still lost more times than I won. I really thought that I was in total control. Looking back on those trips to the casino, I realize now that I was NEVER in control. I was in big time denial.

It wasn't until I got real honest with step one. Answering the questions in the workbook honestly, sharing the details of my gambling excursions with my sponsor, that I noticed the manifestation of my disease. I noticed, once I read it for myself in the step work, every time I would win a big pot at the poker table, it felt like I just took a big hit of cocaine. I felt euphoric, I felt happy, and I felt high. Then every time I would lose a big pot, I felt like I just put a fake rock on my crack pipe, and lit it. I felt ripped off, I felt dirty, and I felt ashamed. Ashamed that I had no self-control. As I drained my ATM card down to the daily limit or zero, whichever came first. I realized that gambling can be worse than my drug of choice. Why is it worse? Because when I used cocaine, and I smoked up all my money, at least I knew, I had gotten high. However, when I gambled away all my money, I was just as broke as if I had smoked, but I could not remember the high I felt from the winning hands. I could only remember the anger, the guilt, and the frustration of all those losing hands! (I DIDNT EVEN GET THE FEELING OF JONESIN, I JUST FELT PISSED OFF.) I remember a cab driver telling me one night on the way home from the casino... "Gambling is the worst drug in the world" I asked him why he felt that way and he said, "It's the worst, because there is no lethal limit. You can overdose, on too much heroin, cocaine, and alcohol, DIE and never use again. However, spend every dime you have at a casino, max out all lines of credit trying to get even, and all that happens is you have to live on ... being broke, busted and disgusted. Only to go back to the casino with the next money you get your hands on". I now believe he was right.

So how did I deal with it, you may ask. I brought the gambling secret I was holding onto, out into the light. I gave it to God and shared it with my sponsor. In my morning meditation prayer, I asked God to not only keep me clean today, I asked, if he would keep me out of the casino today as well. It's been working, I don't keep track of the days like I did when God took away the obsession for cocaine, but I know it's been a long time since I've been back to the card table at Hollywood Park to get my ass kicked once again, by a disease ... that is very, cunning, baffling, and powerful.

Thank you for letting me share.

Paul

When My Faith Withered...



My first two years of my recovery were pretty easy, no real bumps in the road. A couple of weeks ago I lost one of my close friends. Even before I came into

recovery, I have always been a very curious person and I ask a lot of questions. I like to understand everything and do not like the unexplained. Before recovery, I did not have any relationship with a power greater than myself and denounced the religion I was brought up with. Through the program and having a little bit of willingness, I started to believe that there could be something greater than myself out there.

My relationship with my Higher Power has grown in the two plus years I have in the program. I can see him working in my life and I have come to believe that he will never give me something that I cannot handle. When my friend died a couple of weeks ago I started to question my faith and could not understand why something like this would happen to a person so young. It hit me and a couple of my other friends hard. Narcotics Anonymous has taught me that I need to remain willing and open-minded and I never lost faith one hundred percent. Even during the worst periods in the last couple of weeks I knew that my higher power was with me. One other thing Narcotics Anonymous has taught me is that when something happens people are there for you no matter what. The unconditional love in the rooms is so powerful. I do not deal with death very well, like most of us, and I have been in my head a lot in the last couple of weeks. I just keep thinking about who am I going to go ice skating with, or who is going to get Greek food with me. I will always remember her great company.

I keep thinking about the amazing times I had with Danielle. And I remember her big smile and her great hugs. One thing I know is that picking up would not make anything better. I talk to my friends about how I am feeling, and I go to meetings and share about it. One night I could not get her off my mind and I went to a meeting that I do not normally go to, I got out of my comfort zone and got the relief I needed. I received texts from people that I had not talked to in a long time out of concern. The day after she died, I chaired our home group the night Danielle was supposed to share. The power and emotion in that room that night was so strong it was unlike anything I had ever been through in my life. In recent weeks I have come to understand that I will definitely not understand everything that happens, no matter how unfair I think it is. My higher power puts people in my life for many reasons, and I do not believe in coincidences. The grieving process is different for everyone and I am going through the process with the help of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous

David M

Saturday, December 6, 2014

The Greater Los Angeles Area
Tuesday Night Women's Meeting

Women En Vogue

Presents

The Spiritual Journey 21st Annual Brunch

"Romance And Recovery"

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 5985 West Century Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045

10am-2pm Brunch Served 10:30am - 11:30am Donation: \$35.00.

◆ Step Eleven: The “Out of Order” Step

My path to “conscious contact” began with a willingness to believe in the *possibility* of the existence of a Higher Power (I say God because it’s shorter). When I came in to Narcotics Anonymous my idea of “God”, to the extent I had any at all, was ambivalent. I had always figured there had to be some sort of order to the universe. But I didn’t think much about what it was, and he/she or it certainly didn’t seem to be on *my* side anyway. Otherwise why would I have been born with not one, but two alcoholic parents? Or given such a lousy life? I had been raised Catholic so I knew all about praying (and hypocrisy). I remembered other things about going to catechism and church, most of them negative of course. I came to believe (pun intended) that organized religion was pretty much a scam created to relieve people who were intellectually gullible of their excess cash.

At one my first meetings I heard an older woman say, “*if you want what we have, do what we do.*” At that point I wasn’t quite sure I wanted what you had. On the other hand, I knew I didn’t want what I had anymore. Seeing no middle ground I decided to try it your way.. at least for awhile. In the beginning the only faith I really had was in my sponsor. He definitely had what I wanted, a quiet but firm confidence, strength and serenity. These were attributes I had precious little to do with in my years ‘out there’. The first time we met I told him my story (well, most of it). Reviewing some of the more “unmanageable” parts, he gently guided me to the conclusion that I was, undeniably, *Powerless* over drugs and alcohol (being new I still thought there was a distinction between the two). Having established that rather unpalatable fact, he explained that I would need to find a source of Power bigger than me to stay clean.

Well, I knew he was talking about the “G” word. Power”, I knew what you really meant. But I get out of the life and willing to try any-*understood him*” meant I wouldn’t have a ‘loophole’ that made me willing to

After more discussion he asked “*There is a God or there isn’t a* I hesitated only slightly before me, “*the next thing you have to accept* many instances of ‘unmanageability’ it I laughingly agreed. Next he recommended “establish contact” and ask for help to stay and as long or short as I wanted. He suggested that bed at night might be good times. The “when” was *consistently* on a daily basis.

The next suggestion was to make some ‘quiet time’ each day and try to think of nothing at all during that time. “*Even if it sounds stupid or doesn’t make any sense to you, do it anyway.*” The point was he said, to make these things a practice in my life, “*because what we practice, we become good at*”. Sensing my hesitation, he reminded me that we had just agreed I *must* find a source of Power bigger than me to stay clean. This is what he did to stay clean when he was new,

Just For Today

Just for today I will start my day right.
I will fall on my knees and look to the light.
Just for today, I will lose my fears.
I will look to the light and rely on my prayers.
Just for today, I’ll reach out to another and
treat each person as if he were my brother.
Just for today, I will appreciate,
respect, love, and not dictate.
Just for today, When the sun has gone down
I will lie in my bed
and my mind will be sound.
Just for today I will thank the Good Lord
for this 24 hours.
Then I will ask for one more, just for today.

Danah H

**"If you
want what
we have, do
what we
do"**

No matter how many times you people said “Higher wasn’t too freaked about it either. I was desperate thing that might help me do that. Plus, “*as we* to embrace an organized religion. That was at least try doing it your way.

me to answer a very basic question. *God. Which do you believe?*” saying, “*there is a God.*” He then told *is you ain’t it!*” Having just gone over so would have been futile to argue the point, so that I begin praying to my Higher Power to clean. The prayers could be of my own choosing when I woke up in the morning, and when I went to really up to me, the crucial thing was that I do it

and still does today, many years later. Despite many misgivings, I decided to put my faith in him and follow the suggestions. But one thing kind of nagged at me. I knew I was ignorant about how the Steps were supposed to work. But I also remembered someone say at a meeting “*the 12 Steps are in order for a reason*”. Heck, there was an “11th Step Meeting” on the schedule that would have been very convenient for me. But I didn’t go because I thought I had to wait until I got to Step 11. Now he wants me to pray and meditate already? I was hoping to be spared the “God stuff” until I had more clean time. Reluctantly, I expressed these feelings to him.

After a brief pause he gave me a peculiar smile and said, “*you heard correctly, the Steps are in order for a reason.*” Vastly relieved, I smiled back thinking, “*I’m off the hook!*” Then he continued, “*but it’s never too early to begin practicing prayer and meditation and besides, if you wait until Step 11 to pray and meditate we may never get there.*”

MC J.



1 YEAR
Samuel B 11/24/13
Michelle S 11/05/13

2 YEARS
LaSonya G 11/26/12
Horace L 11/17/12
Nikah W 11/14/12
Lavniere V 11/09/12

3 YEARS
Mishayla 12/31/11
Deon G 12/30/11
Aida M 12/28/11
Christopher M 12/10/11
Kenroy T 12/08/11
Malinda M 11/16/11
Kim R 11/14/11
Michael C 11/13/11
Barbrette W 11/06/11

4 YEARS
Anthony R 12/19/10
Matt D 12/15/10
David B 12/08/10
Yvonne M 12/05/10
Norma N 11/17/10
Wesley (Devious) J 11/04/10
Howard W 11/02/10

5 YEARS
Dennis S 12/29/09
Samantha H 12/23/09
Juan S 12/22/09
Felicia J 12/22/09
Emmit L 12/11/09
Lorranine G 12/10/09
Emmit L 12/09/09
Tanya H 12/07/09
Lee Mc 12/07/09
Chauncey F 11/29/09
Mitzi S 11/06/09
Ashanti L 11/04/09
Demetric D 11/02/09
Herschel C 11/01/09

6 YEARS
Rita C 12/28/08
Conrad W 12/03/08
Felicia J 11/26/08
Raquel D 11/24/08
Brenda J 11/22/08
Russell H 11/05/08
Beverly H 11/04/08
Brenda J 11/02/08

7 YEARS
Rita C 12/28/07
Richard W 12/25/07
Donald M 12/19/07
Gary L 12/15/07
Floyd E 12/13/07
Gregory E 12/13/07
Clausel N 12/12/07
Gloria M 11/27/07
Tim R 12/06/07
Silvia S 11/27/07
Richard W 11/22/07
Cari D 11/21/07
Gina P 11/08/07
Terry M 11/07/07
Marisol C 11/05/07

8 YEARS
Floyd (Sho-Nuff) E 12/13/06
Benchietta G 12/04/06
Donna M 12/05/06
Benchietta G 12/04/06
Patricia H 12/04/06
Corbette L 12/02/06
Carolyn B 11/16/06
Tony B 11/13/06
Eddie V 11/12/06
Rickie S 11/01/06

9 YEARS
Dale H 12/31/05
Cheryl C 12/30/05
Tyrone D 12/28/05
Ricky T 12/20/05
Oregena T 12/20/05
Guy C 12/15/05
Angela M 12/14/05
Starla M 12/12/05
Elaine R 12/11/05
Pelar T 12/10/05
Jacqueline R 12/05/05
Patricia L 12/05/05
Delison C 12/05/05
Dale C 12/05/05
Steven J 11/29/05

LaToya G 11/28/05
Orlando Y 11/28/05
Clifford D 11/23/05
Charmaine C 11/21/05
Beatrice M 11/21/05
Kimberly N 11/20/05
Clarence B 11/17/05
Randy N 11/05/05

10 YEARS
Louis M 12/28/04
Chandra F 12/28/04
Forrestine G 12/23/04
Flora B 12/18/04
Gregory W 12/12/04
Sherman W 12/05/04
Kisha H 11/24/04
Leo T 11/24/04
Kimberly N 11/20/04
Marcus B 11/17/04
Darrell L 11/06/04

11 YEARS
Dee R 12/28/03
Melody S 12/24/03
George J 12/17/03
Carlton E 12/07/03
Brenda W 12/16/03
Vanessa S 12/15/03
Maurice C 12/14/03
Bob D 12/10/03
Candice Y 12/09/03
Timothy R 12/09/03
Bridgett G 12/05/03
Laura R 12/05/03
Shannon S 12/03/03
Andre L 11/28/03
Allen T 11/22/03
Jay B 1 11/17/03
Tony P 11/17/03
Carlton E 11/16/03
Toney H 11/14/03
Mama H 11/13/03
Terrence P 11/13/03
Antoine S 11/11/03

12 YEARS
Arthur G 12/31/02
Mark L 12/30/02
Richard F 12/29/02
Gary W 12/27/02
Derwin O 12/21/02
Trecia S 12/18/02
Kim W 12/17/02
Herbert G 12/15/02
Suzette R 12/13/02
Marvin M 12/13/02
Michele T 12/12/02
Barbara Mc 12/11/02
Precilla 12/07/02
E.J. 12/07/02
Romeo M 12/05/02
Ronald R 12/05/02
Roosevelt W 11/27/02
Gene M 11/25/02
Howard A 11/25/02
Rick B 11/15/02
Terence P 11/14/02
Ernest W 11/12/02
Anthony T 11/07/02
Guillermina M 11/07/02
Roosevelt Y 11/06/02
Kevin M 11/06/02
Herschel C 11/02/02
Alyson P 11/01/02
Angie M 11/01/02

13 YEARS
Lisa D 12/30/01
Mark W 12/30/01
Alex M 12/25/01
William H 12/21/01
Lisa T 11/21/01
Olivia R 12/17/01
David P 12/12/01
Joe J 12/10/01
Martin V 12/05/01
Michael Y 12/03/01
Squeak T 11/29/01
Taylor A 11/29/01
Big Dre 11/28/01
Andre' T 11/28/01
Joyce K 11/27/01
Lisa S.L. 11/27/01
Lee G 11/26/01
Demarest D 11/24/01
Lisa L 11/21/01
Elsa R 11/15/01
James B 11/11/01
Darrell B 11/09/01
Felix P 11/07/01

14 YEARS
Kevin M 11/06/01
Robia S 11/01/01

15 YEARS
April S 12/25/99
Sheryll P 12/23/99
Linda A 12/18/99
Johnny R 12/16/99
Benson R 12/16/99
Wanda L 12/16/99
Felicia B 12/14/99
Ruben M 12/13/99
Demetric M 12/11/99
Emmit L 12/09/99
Mark M 12/06/99
Eugene H 12/04/99
Monty R 12/03/99
George N 12/01/99
Jenine K 11/30/99
Squire M 11/26/99
Angela L 11/26/99
Stacy D 11/20/99
Jerry L 11/16/99

16 YEARS
Charles G 12/30/98
Marquitta M 12/28/98
Donna D 12/24/98
Brenda C 12/23/98
Sherlanda M 12/10/98
Sarah T 12/10/98
Greg A 11/26/98
Rhonda G 11/25/98
Thurman G 11/23/98
Clarence C 11/22/98
Samuel B 11/18/98
Jeff W 11/16/98
Deborah G 11/15/98
Tyrone R 11/12/98
Roxann S 11/08/98
Rene W 11/05/98
Calvert S 11/03/98

17 YEARS
Redd M 12/28/97
James J 12/25/97
Keisha J 12/22/97
Gloria Mc 12/18/97
Paul H 12/16/97
Tanya C 12/13/97
Terry W 12/12/97
Darrell M 11/10/97
Wanda R 11/10/97
Tracy L 11/06/97
Yolanda W 11/03/97

18 YEARS
Elia C 12/23/96
Nathan K 12/17/96
Robert F 12/16/96
Linda B 12/12/96
Bennie H 12/04/96
Leslie L 11/11/96
Sandy P 11/12/96
Lester R 11/11/96
Marvin W 11/05/96
Marvin H 11/04/96
Michelle H 11/04/96
Mylynda P 11/02/96

19 YEARS
Richard M 12/27/95
Gloria McC 12/18/95
Terrell W 12/16/95
Jimmy J 12/12/95
Beverly Mc 12/05/95
Richard M 11/27/95
Tony H 11/15/95
Clarence M 11/12/95
Margarita H 11/12/95
Yolanda H 11/09/95

Danny H 11/02/95
20 YEARS
Vivian J 12/27/94
Raymond M 12/27/94
Rev Lightfoot 12/13/94
John S 12/08/94
Karlin L 12/03/94
Olga T 11/10/94
Roosevelt W (cha cha cha) 11/04/94

21 YEARS
Renee G 12/29/93
Cornella S 12/20/93
Iris L 12/19/93
Elijah B 12/18/93
Pam S 12/14/93
Peggy P 12/10/93
Nat H 12/09/93
Jesse W 12/07/93
Mario C 12/07/93
Kathy J 12/03/93
Pam N 11/30/93
Belinda B 11/23/93
Jerry J 11/20/93
Dana 11/16/93
Nikki C 11/11/93
Roosevelt W 11/04/93
Deborah J 11/03/93
Cheryl E 11/03/93

22 YEARS
Sidney L 12/24/92
Robin D 11/23/92
Marvette A 11/16/92
Mylynda O 11/06/92
Kevin M 11/05/92
Sherri M 11/04/92
Cheryl E 11/02/92

23 YEARS
Moe 12/26/91
Alex M 12/25/91
Volanda P 12/09/91
Sonia O 12/02/91
Daniel G 11/20/91

24 YEARS
Bobby C 12/25/90
Dwayne H 11/26/90
Catherine W 11/15/90
Darryl S 11/05/90

25 YEARS
Bruce S 12/21/89
Zelda E 12/18/89
Jerome S 12/18/89
Vanessa W 12/18/89
Dwayne H 11/26/89
Yvonne A 11/20/89
Eddie T 11/16/89
Terry Mc 11/07/89

26 YEARS
Sepi B 11/28/88
Percy H 11/23/88
Raheem M 11/16/88
Pam H 11/14/88

27 YEARS
Dan S 12/27/87
James J 12/25/87
Elijah W 12/24/87
Jose G 12/20/87
Kim B 12/17/87

28 YEARS
Jennifer B 12/26/86
Chester W 11/07/86
Earl G 11/06/86
Joyce F 11/02/86
Anderia M 11/01/86

29 YEARS
Dwayne J 12/27/85
James A 12/23/85
Kevin H 12/15/85

30 YEARS
Raymond M 12/27/84
Rita H 11/24/84
Wallace R 11/16/84
Cornish H 11/03/84

34 YEARS
Dennis L 12/16/80

36 YEARS

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.

Submit articles to:

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