



Clean Times Newsletter

Siouxland Area of Narcotics Anonymous



So what's the point?

At this time there isn't really much I want for...spiritually at least. I believe in a power greater than myself and this belief is what gets me through the rough time. Sometimes my faith in my higher power has been the only thing that made me hold on, a few minutes at a time; telling myself over and over "it will get better." Point #1: In order to have any kind of success in this program I must believe in a power greater than myself.

Recently my wife and I had a rough patch, to put it mildly. I won't go into the details but we ended up separated for a couple of very long stretches and I was going out of my mind with grief and self-loathing. Being a typical addict I am always looking for a way to escape from cruel reality. And the first thought I had at one of these times was "I should go to the bar and think this over" or "I really should look up so & so and just visit for a while. Never mind that so & so was once in the program and decided that he preferred the previous lifestyle and went right back out. Point #2: If I am hungry, angry, lonely or spiritually tired...GO TO A MEETING!

I will say this only one time; my higher power speaks to me. There, I said it. I'm not a mad man (I promise.) The main thing I try to do is keep myself in a state of mind that I will *hear* his voice. As usual he speaks to me in a way I can understand. I once very clearly heard the fragment of a song "Do you wanna die?" Point #3: God is always doing one of two things; speaking to me or speaking through me.

I tried to remember if I had ever been real good at making decisions on my own. I thought of all the situations that came from my best thinking (jails & institutions) and realized that I'm not the best authority on running my life. Point #4: I place my life in the hands of God daily and *try* not to interfere with what he wants for me. I don't always get what I want, but I always get what I need.

I don't claim to be a perfect man by any stretch of the imagination but most of all I try to live a life of *honor*. This is not always easy and sometimes it seems like a curse. I am one of the few people who has

returned a hundred dollar bill just because it wouldn't be right to keep it. I'm also one of the few who chose not to take advantage of another person's vulnerability when many others did. Point #5: If I strive for nothing, then that is exactly what I get. And Point #6: Just because everyone else is doing it doesn't make it right; even in recovery.

A coworker and I were speaking of another who has recently been diagnosed with cancer. "Are you a praying man?" she asked, "yes I am" I answered. She went on to ask me to keep our coworker in my prayers as he is a very good man. I couldn't agree more and when I pray, he is remembered. I couldn't elaborate to her further as I keep all of my coworkers at a certain distance from my life but I will let *you* in on a little secret... Point #7: My whole life is a prayer.

To be continued...
This is the first half of an essay by Herb P. Look for the conclusion in the July issue

Volume 2009 Issue II

April 2009

Many of us have said:
Take my will and my life
Guide me in my recovery
And show me how to live

And also:
My gratitude speaks
When I care
And when I share
With others
The NA way

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A silent voice, heard loud and clear

A member of NA, who previously had been attending meetings regularly, stopped going.

After a few weeks, her sponsor decided to visit her. It was a chilly evening and the sponsor found the sponsee at home

alone sitting before a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for her sponsor's visit, the sponsee welcomed her, led her to the fireplace, and waited.

Her sponsor made herself comfortable but said nothing.

In the long silence she contemplated the play of flames around the burning logs. After some minutes the sponsor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember, and placed it to one side of the hearth, all alone. Then she sat

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ILS

ILS (In Loving Service) will be a recurring article from different members and is intended to communicate all things "service" in our area and elsewhere in the NA community. Look for it in upcoming issues!



ILSie, SANA's Service hound

In this first edition of ILS, I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts and experiences in serving NA.

I started doing service work, like many others, very early in recovery. After a meeting one night and with, like 1 month clean, I was convinced to be GSR of a group I frequented.

"Don't worry, you'll do just fine" they said to my protest that I didn't know anything about it, "just do your best."

I guess my best was good enough because with less than a year clean I was Alternate Regional Committee Member, then ascended to RCM the following year and then...

Those of you who have been around more

than a month know what I'm talking about. It's commonly referred to as being "roped in" but I never really experienced it like that.

From the very start my service work brought me closer to the people who had the recovery experience I needed to learn how to stay clean and I recognized that as a good thing.

In time, I learned that there are so many personal benefits to doing service work that I couldn't keep a straight face when I heard the phrase "selflessly giving back what was so freely given to me"

Selfless, hell—I got to hang out with really cool people, travel to new places and meet more cool people who were doing things I never imagined I could do. And all the while picking up real life skills that helped me strengthen my recovery and advance my professional and social life. Selfless? I think not.

Service also enhanced my sense of belonging and instilled in me a degree of responsibility and ownership that made me personally responsible for the decisions we made and that made me accountable to the NA community for our actions.

Oh yeah, all the work got done too!

- Joel L

Clean Time birthdays: 2009

January

- Libby D. 90 Days
- Chris B. 1 year
- Bill O. 5 years
- George O. 7 years
- Joel L. 12 years
- Jeff L. 13 years

February

- Brian B. 10 years
- Rick B. 15 years
- Tonya H. 18 years
- John S. 21 years
- Bev M. 22 years
- Roger H. 24 years

The July issue will celebrate birthdays from March, April and May 2009

Be sure you include yours on the sign-up sheet at your group!

Interview with an addict

CTN: You've been in recovery for a while; how is your life different now?

Addict X: If I had to say it in a word it'd be "easier." I mean, if you compare it to how hard I worked at [screwing] it up there's really no comparison.

CTN: Do you think recovery is boring?

Addict X: Recovery? No. I mean, life is sometimes but that really depends on me. Like, if I decide to sit on the couch all night or get off my [butt] and go to a meeting or maybe call a friend and go to a movie or something.

CTN: How does stress factor in to this if your life is easier now.

Addict X: Well, there's definitely more

stress now—at least what I'm Aware of, but it's different somehow. Maybe it's easier for me to handle stressful situations now that my head's clear.

CTN: Do you see things differently?

Addict X: Oh wow, yeah, for sure. Mostly people. Like when I was using I didn't really care except what I could get from them. It's like peeking out of a key-hole all your life then someone opens the door and there's this whole world out there.

CTN: Do you think people see you differently too?

Addict X: Yeah-I mean, I hope so. That matters to me now. Maybe— well, I had pride before too but, its like I take pride in my-

self and what I do now where before it was shallow— false pride maybe.

CTN: If you could change anything about your life, what would it be?

Addict X: I don't know really— I mean, sure there's lots of things that could be better. But it all kind of comes back to me and what I'm willing to do to get it, you know?

But if I had to pick one thing, I guess I'd make it so that the stuff I should do and the stuff I want to do were the same thing a little more often.

CTN: Anything you want to add?

Addict X: Yeah, I want to thank everyone that does their part, you know, for the program. I think it's pretty awesome!





A silent voice, heard loud and clear (continued from page one)

back in her chair, still silent.

The sponsee watched this in quiet fascination. As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow, and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. Just before the sponsor was ready to leave, she picked up the cold dead ember and placed it back into the middle of the fire.

Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it. As the sponsor got up to

leave, the sponsee said, "thank you so much for your visit, and especially for the "fiery" sermon."

"I'll meet you at the meeting in the morning."

Author unknown

Reprinted from the NA Way Magazine

July 2000

" There are two certainties in the attempt to get clean: 1, There is someone in your life who will look for excuses to sabotage your recovery at every turn and 2, That person is yourself."

- Quote from **Trench Warfare**
By **Herb P**



" So we found out very early and our experience has taught us, that we can have no bosses, no big-shots in NA"

-Quote from transcripts of **Jimmy K** speaking at the 20th anniversary dinner of NA

Goodbye to alcohol and other drugs

I need to write this because my life depends on it

First of all I want to say I loved you with all my heart. You gave me something no one else could do. And up to that day I was looking and I didn't know what to do.

I want to tell you that you cheated me by not giving me your promises and setting me free from life and the pain there is to feel and see.

You're who I found, so of course I loved only you. I gave you my heart and I was willing to give you each and every little part.

You made me believe you loved me, and you would set me free. You let me live life not able to be me.

You made it last a long time. You made me believe I wouldn't ever have to worry again. And it wouldn't cost a dime.

I gave you everything I had: my family, my friends, my children, even my house and car. You told me you'd always keep me in your sight and I'd never have to worry about losing a fight.

I didn't want to feel the hurt and pain. I wouldn't have seen anything to gain and I

would have died for you and even went insane.

I gave you everything I had. That's what makes this letter sick and really sad. I would have killed for you because that's all I ever did; was trying to love and please only you.

You made it feel and sound so good, and I was looking and didn't know where I should.

You never showed me the love, like God does above. Today I know why, and I don't have to be high.

You made it last a very long time. You never told me or showed me. You are scum and lower than slime.

I always felt you weren't right, just by the way you kept everyone around me in fright. And I kept beating myself up for not doing right.

But today I want to tell you, all you ever did was keep me in fright. And I know today, I lost every fight. And now I'm going to stand up and do what I know is right.

And that's to let everyone I can know who you are, and to admit I allowed you to take over my life and I went too far.

Let's not pretend. I'm not coming with you in the end. I am going to be your worst nightmare. And I don't want to pretend. I am turning my back on you and showing people I really do care. And letting them know if they love through life and share, then life they really can bear.

You're the devil in disguise. You are not the one that rules the skies. I know there are other people out there you might buy. And I hope and pray that there will come a day, there will be no one out there you will ever pay.

You almost had me but now I am free. Now I am telling you, don't come calling on me. I found someone else that really loves me. And I know that with his help, from you my spirit will stay free.

I know you know who I am talking about. And God will never put me out. So I am telling you, you'd better take a different route.

This is the end for me and you. And God is going to make this come true. And so now I am finally saying my final goodbye to you.

-Vicky W



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Narcotics Anonymous

Recovery starts here



From the Editor

I began recovery in '97 and, like many others, found myself in a strange new world where people said things like "Easy does it" and "One day at a time" and other sentiments of recovery we hear and say so often.

It wasn't only the things they said that affected me; it was also the things they *did*. "Dude, going to the meeting tonight?" they asked, "need a ride?" And afterwards it was often "Lets go to coffee; I'll buy...".

I also remember reading my very first Clean Times newsletter and for some reason feeling a sense of connection that I'd never really experienced before—in recovery or otherwise. This was to become one of my biggest opportunities to grow.

You read a newsletter and have an epiph-

any? Well, yeah, sort of. Ok, not really. But I did feel an attraction to it and *that* caused me to reach out to the then editor, Rick B, who informed me that he was thinking about stepping down after several years of service to the newsletter.

"I just feel like maybe it's time for someone else to step up" he said. Aside from my initial disappointment I didn't really think much more about it until one fine (second Sunday) at area the Chair person announced that the Newsletter Chair position was open.

Another ASC meeting went by and then another... Still there was no one to do the job. Having just completed a two-year gig as RCM I was expecting to coast for a while before taking another position, but I just couldn't stand the idea of not having a

newsletter. "I'll try it" I said, "if Rick will help me".

Help he did and so did plenty of others. Excitement began to grow as we put together that first volume. I could never have guessed the spiritual rewards I gained then and since as a result. I learned some things about me and I also learned a lot about NA and the people that make it a fellowship.

Now nine years later I once again have the opportunity to serve this cause and I know that with your help we can pick up where Jessie left off and continue to enrich our recovery with this fine publication.

Thank you.

- Joel L

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The Clean Times Newsletter is a Quarterly Publication produced and distributed within the NA community by the Siouxland Area of Narcotics Anonymous.

Would you like to contribute? Why not write up an article that describes your experiences in recovery to share with others who might not otherwise hear your story or attend the same meetings that you do?

Where to Start: Type or write your article, fill out a transfer form (available online or at your group) and turn them in to your current newsletter chair, your GSR or another trusted servant.

Need help? No problem!

Call or email: 712-234-1586/nodope@cableone.net

Or just catch me at a meeting!

Joel

