



Clean Times Newsletter

Siouxland Area of Narcotics Anonymous



So what's the point? Part two (Continued from April 2009)

Some of the best recovery conversations I've had were with those outside the program. I use these folks when I find myself alone in recovery. Any port in the storm I say. Once when feeling spiritually empty I told a pastor that I doubted God a lot more than I believed and he replied "It is a shame that most people see doubt and faith as different ends of the spectrum. In fact, doubt and faith are not opposites; they are simply different sides of the same coin. Always remember that where there is doubt, there is faith" Point #8: I look for recovery where I will find it; not just in NA books and meetings.

I never hide the fact that I was once a serious party animal or the fact that I now choose not to live that lifestyle. And while maintaining my personal anonymity, I never miss an opportunity to carry the message of recovery to those outside the program. I have limited success but I am always carrying the message that you can live your life without drugs and that it doesn't have to be boring. Point #9: Having had a spiritual awakening I try to carry this message to addicts and practice these principles in all my affairs.

Having a wife that is clean helps but I need to keep up my phone calls with people inside the program. Before I use dope, I use the phone. Point #10: The phone is indispensable in my recovery; two addicts talking recovery is a meeting.

I have one day of recovery. That being said I generally assume I could be using dope by the end of the day, which is to say, I never trust myself to stay clean and therefore I must always be taking some kind of action to stay clean. Point #11: I don't trust the addict in me; he will use every time.

Recently I was asked to speak at a meeting. I accepted out of hand – if the program asks, I do the work. I learned that early in my recovery that if the program seems to take up too much of my time, then maybe I still haven't finished my last fix. Eventually I got most of my life back. In the beginning though, if I was not constantly in some kind of recovery mode I doubt I could have had any success in recovery. Point #12: I have never asked someone to give me recovery because I learned early on that recovery is something I take for myself. And though I have had some measure of success

in recovery I still must do the work when the program asks.

I believe the best sponsors are the ones I pick in secret. They never know they are my sponsor and so they never feel obligated to "fix" me. I have had no less than ten sponsors in my recovery life and the really cool thing is that they have fulfilled NA's promise to me: I haven't had to use drugs to live for many days in a row. Today I have three sponsors and not one of them is wise to my diabolical scheme (or so I believe.) Point #13: Regardless of who or how, I need a sponsor.

I have been in fights, I have belittled people and gossiped about them and I still have a mean jealous streak when it comes to my wife. I have many defects of character that need to be addressed and I've made many mistakes in recovery and in life. I suppose some may even speak harshly behind my back. So why do I keep coming back? Point #14: Through the good graces of God I learned to forgive others and I also learned that it is alright to forgive myself. [That whole amends thing...]

And that my friend is the greatest gift this program has ever given me.

Herb P

My name is Crystal Meth

I destroy homes and tear families apart, take your children and that's just the start. More valued than diamonds, more precious than gold. The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.

If you need me remember, I'm easily found. I live all around you, in school and in town. I live with

the rich, I live with the poor. Live down the street or maybe next door.

Made in a lab, but not like you think, I can be made under your kitchen sink, in your child's closet or even out in the woods. If this scares you to death, then it certainly should. I have many names

but the one you'll know best, I know you've heard of me; my name is Crystal Meth.

My power is awesome. Try me, you'll see. But if you do you may never break free. Try me once and I might let you go. Try me twice then I'm in your soul.

Continued on page 3

Volume 2009 Issue III

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Tell yourself:

Just for today my thoughts will be on my recovery, living and enjoying life without the use of drugs

Just for today I will have faith in someone in NA who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery.

Just for today I will have a program. I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.

Just for today, through NA, I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

Just for today I will be unafraid, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear.

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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

I've learned that I can stay clean by helping other addicts, but something that I've always found a bit perplexing is whether or not I can change for the better. The best answer I can give is “maybe.” Staying clean and changing for the better don't always go hand in hand, and I've heard many addicts share about both.

My experience is that there is a greater good to be served. Whether I am with my sponsor, in my group, in my ASC, or in my RSC, there is always something bigger than what I'm involved with. I think that once we have five or ten or fifteen years clean, we have a debt to that bigger something, to the greater good. I'm not saying everyone must follow one path or keep moving along the service structure in NA—not at all. I'm saying that what I had to do was find a way to contribute to

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the betterment of the fellowship that saved my life. It's actually a requirement for me. If we want NA to be here for other addicts, especially those close to us, we need to do something specific about it.

There is always service, many levels and many opportunities of all types for just about everyone. However, if someone doesn't want to be involved in direct NA service, then we can and should support those who *are* being of service. I can help others make sure that they follow through, provide the oral and written reports required, or that they stay focused on the purpose of their subcommittee or board. It seems that it really is our responsibility to support our elected/appointed servants avoid the “traps” of structured service like irresponsibility, out-of-control ego, loss of focus, or falling prey to the myriad control issues that can arise in the service arena.

I can serve the greater good on a one-to-one basis or in a service committee, but it's important that I carry NA's message, pass along NA's steps and the NA approach to working them, and especially, strive to help the NA service structure stabilize and grow. If we all get what we need through our program, then we can help NA grow and we can be connected to the worldwide fellowship. It's really that simple.

I've learned from others that local NA communities change and grow when an oldtimer reaches out for a long-distance sponsor to learn NA's steps, when communities rely on NA's literature for their step work and service, or when our members become willing to make a commitment to ask for help from experienced members in other places and other parts of the world. For many years our members had to take the experiences of other organizations and interpret them for application to the disease of addiction in our

own program. Today, I am convinced that NA members don't have to do that anymore and, in fact, we don't serve the greater good when we do.

“I want to encourage others to find what they do best and where they can do it, and then serve the greater good with passion and dedication”

I want to encourage others to find what they do best and where they can do it, and then serve the greater good with passion and dedication. If an addict chooses to do this on a one-to-one basis, that can be just as beneficial as fulfilling a commitment in the service environment. I think we owe it to new members and people we sponsor to help them learn the NA message and learn how to help NA be a credible and viable path for addicts to follow in recovery. Our loved ones may need NA some day, and we want it to be here for them. To do less is a compromise and shortcut I'm not willing to take. I hope others don't compromise, either.

If one definition of “spiritual” is “non-self-centered,” as our literature implies, then serving the greater good isn't a bad thing at all, and it can probably be one path to becoming a better person.

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My name is Crystal Meth (continued from page one)

You do what you have to, you'll steal and lie. You'll do what you have to, just to get high. The crimes you commit for my narcotic charms will be worth the pleasures you'll feel in my arms. You'll lie to your mother and steal from your dad, when you see their tears you must feel sad. Forget your morals and how you were raised, I'll be your conscience, I'll teach you my ways.

I take kids from parents and I take parents from kids, take people from God and separate friends. I'll take 'til you've no more to give, when I'm finished with you, you'll be lucky to live.

If you try me be warned, this is not a game. If I'm given the chance, I'll drive you insane, ravage your body and control your mind. I'll own you completely, your soul will be mine.

The nightmares I give you while lying in bed, the voices you'll hear from inside your head. The sweats, shakes and visions you'll see, I want you to know these things are gifts from me.

By then it's too late, you know in your heart, that you are mine and we shall never part. They regret they tried me and they always do, but you'll come to me, not I to you.

-Anonymous - SANA



Clean Time birthdays: 2009

March

- Jason C: 90 days
- Chris H: 6 months
- Cody H: 6 months
- Chrissie R: 6 months
- Trixie S: 9 monts
- Sarah T: 1 year
- Scott T: 1 year
- Ross W: 2 years
- Janell J: 3 years
- Coletta B: 19 years
- Colin M: 24 years

- Libby D: 6 months
- Matt W: 9 months
- Molly H: 1 year
- Sarah S: 1 year
- Shawn A: 1 year
- Robert S: 2 years
- Tim F: 3 years
- JJ H: 3 years
- Bob J: 5 years
- Rob H: 18 years

May

- April**
- Ted H: 30 days
- Brian G: 90 days

- Matt H: 60 days
- Dawn V: 90 days
- Darcy R: 6 months

Our Gratitude Speaks

“Even in silence, the voice of our gratitude does not go unheard. It speaks most clearly as we walk the path of recovery. Selflessly giving to those we meet along the way. We venture forth on our spiritual journey, our lives enriched, our spirits awakened, and our horizons ever expanding.

The quintessential spirit that lies inside each one of us, the spark of life that was almost extinguished by our disease, has been renewed by working the twelve steps of Narcotics Anonymous. It is on the path paved with these steps that our future journey begins.

*-It Works: How and Why
Page 122*

- Dave M: 1 year
- Elise C: 1 year
- Kelly V: 18 months
- Laura W: 2 years
- Melissa W: 3 years
- Glen M: 6 years

The October issue will celebrate birthdays from June, July and August 2009

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



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Narcotics Anonymous

Recovery starts here



From the Editor

I can't begin to tell you what an honor it is to serve our area and produce the Clean Times Newsletter.

I have received much feed-back from the previous issue and much encouragement overall from members who are excited about it and for that I am grateful.

I just want to take a moment here to remind you that everything you read in this publication was written by an NA member just like you.

We are not professional writers nor does any expect us to be. I say that to encourage **you** to write an article of your own.

Many to whom I speak reply "but I'm not very good at writing" or "I wouldn't know what to write" when invited to submit an article.

So what's the trick? Think of those moments

when, sitting in a meeting and a topic moves you to speak. Are you a professional speaker? More likely you are simply engaged in a topic about which you are passionate.

That's your article!

Maybe you've recently overcome a major challenge in your recovery. Perhaps it was very difficult or maybe you just needed the right motivation to tackle the issue.

That's your article!

So maybe you don't write well or don't even have a computer; I'll help you do it—and be glad to!

Please consider sharing your recovery with the rest of us, we'd love to hear from you

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



Joel L