

# Experience, Strength, and Hope Newsletter

February and March Edition

WRASCNA

**“What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.” Basic Text, Page 65.**

Gratitude speaks when we carry the message. WRASCNA needs your help! The following subcommittees and positions need filled:

Alternate secretary (6 mo. Clean required)

Alternate Treasurer (2 yrs. Clean required)

H&I chairperson (2 yrs. Clean required) and members to chair meetings.

Literature Committee Chairperson (3 yrs. Clean Required).

Subcommittees in need of participation

H&I meets at noon on the third Sunday of the month at 1480 Eastwood Ave., Akron, Ohio

PR subcommittee meets at 1pm on the third Sunday of the month at 1480 Eastwood Ave.

Activities is meeting on Zoom.

Newsletter meets the first Sunday of the month at 7pm 1567 Pilgram Drive, Stow Ohio.

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Deadlines for submissions: 10th day of the second month: next date for clean dates and submissions **APRIL 10, 2024**. Clean dates should be for the months prior to publication.

## **Clean Time Anniversaries**

**Patty M. 1/01/89.**

**Renee R. 12/08/14.**

**Jenny F. 12/15/11**

**Melissa L. 1/05/13**

**Abigail B. 1/11/14**

**Ben Hengle 1/09/20**

**Kristi Speare 1/21/17**

**Darnell S. 1/21/06**

**Brandy 1/05/16**

**Christle Stephens 1/14/14**

**Erica Beth Jewell 12/02/14**

**Tracy P. 12/15/14**

**Matthew B. 2/24/22**

**Amanda M. 2/23/23**

### **My Favorite form of service is...**

Service that helps carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Humble service that isn't directly noticed or recognized by other people -service I do "for the right reason".

Service that brings addicts together for fun and fellowship.

Service that emphasizes that the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.

In Loving Service,

-No name necessary.

## Steps

We hear it all the time, “the steps are the solution”. What does it mean? For me, the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous are the key to unlocking a new me. I write on steps, share them with my sponsor, and try to apply them to my life. When I came into recovery, I didn’t know who I was, and I was afraid to find out. When I began digging deep into these questions, I was being asked and sharing things with my sponsor, I started learning more about who I am and who I want to be. Step one focuses on surrender, I have to surrender my old way of life for a new one. I have to stop fighting with myself. Step two was a tough one for me. I had an aversion to the idea of God or a Higher Power. What does being restored to sanity even mean? Have I ever been sane? Step three was interesting for me. I was struggling with my faith in a Higher Power. I had to clear up some wreckage of my past and ended up going to jail clean. That entire situation was perfect for where I was in my recovery. I was given the opportunity to take responsibility for my actions while leaving the results up to my Higher Power. Step four is one of my favorites. I experienced the most growth here, at least so far! Step five helped me to find some humility. I’m not the worst person ever and I’m not the best. Step six was a wake-up call, and a painful one. I still exhibit all of these behaviors when I’m clean! That means that I need to do something about it, onto step seven. Now I have to ask God to remove these shortcomings and that definitely doesn’t happen when I want it to, and they aren’t all removed. Step 8 is literally just making a list, but I tend to overcomplicate everything. Step 9 is where I make amends and by this time, I have already changed my behavior and shown the people in my life that I am living my life differently. The people that I had hurt the most, had already ac, everyone accepted my amends even before I even asked, because they had seen the changes in my daily in my life. This is one of the reasons that the steps are in order. Step 10 is my daily inventory, and another favorite. I become hyper aware of my actions, or lack thereof every day. This is one step I want to practice daily, but I always find excuses as to why I don’t have the time. Step eleven was just increased conscious contact with my Higher Power. Step twelve is how I give it back. I work on becoming a better person so I can help others. The solution is there for us, we just have to do the footwork.

-Alexandra H.

## Heard It in a Meeting

God’s taking it back and I hold onto it. I hold onto stuff so hard that it has claw marks on it.

I like to think of a sponsor as someone who tethers us to humanity.

I would walk through hell in a gasoline suit to get what narcotics anonymous has given me.

Shed the negative self-talk like a snake sheds its skin.

Not working a program is like going to my favorite restaurant and watching you all eat while I starve.

I was like a bird that was afraid of heights.

If you're sponsoring yourself, you're listening to the last MF'er you got high with.

Am I finding chaos in my peace or finding peace in my chaos?

Procrastinating is not about being lazy.

Procrastinating is about avoiding emotions.

If you don't pick up, you can't get high.

I don't "fit in" to NA. I belong.

-Lisa D.

## WHAT ABOUT GOD?

**What about God? So many addicts share their aversion to the word, "God".**

**Whether they are atheists, agnostics, have had bad experiences with organized religion, or are outright angry with God; it can be a huge barrier blocking the way to recovery. Fortunately, our literature and the experience of other recovering addicts can get rid of that obstacle.**

**We are told that the "God of our understanding "should be loving, caring, and greater than ourselves. Other than that, it's up to each of us to determine what "God" means. That meaning can even change over time, since NA has no rules or definitions about who or what God is.**

- **On page 25, the Basic Text removes the complexities of defining "God". It says, "Many of us understand God to be simply whatever force keeps us clean."**

**Here are some anagrams that can be used if you don't know where to begin. I got this list from a recovering addict that lives thousands of miles away, yet it can be useful to so many people right here in our area. I hope it helps!**

- **GOD- Group of Drug Addict**
- **GOD- Good Orderly Direction**
- **GOD-Gift of Desperation**
- **GOD-Grow or Die**
- **GOD-Glory of Death**
- **GOD-Getting off Drugs**
- **GOD-Guide of Destiny**
- **GOD-Greatest of Designers**

- **GOD-Garden of Delight**  
-Lisa D.

## **The Benefits of Step 4 and 5**

In the process of making a very honest self-assessment of myself in step 4, I wanted to know what was wrong with me all of those years. I wrote everything that came to mind, and much was discovered. More was revealed in this step than I could have ever hoped for. The more I put into it, the more I got back out. And I really wanted to know!

I had felt lost for most of my life and step 4 led to starting to discover the things that needed to be discovered to grow. It brought me clarity and helped me to begin to see who I really am, what my long-forgotten morals were, and what I believe, not what everyone else told me I should believe.

This helped me to sort through my life and where it took me. It helped me to see how I repeated many of the bad choices, behaviors, and decisions with different people and situations, thinking something was different, yet it was the same thing over and over! The insanity was brought to my full attention. I started to see my behavior and why I did what I did. It showed much deeper reasons for why I *really* did so many things that were later regretted. It helped wake me up! The layers of the onion were starting to peel away.

This was a turning point for me; where life could now begin to change and improve, a little at a time. It gave me so many reasons to keep coming back and to continue in step work. It helped me to see some of the good things about myself that were buried inside for so many years. Most of all, it was the beginning step of becoming free to be who I am and letting go of that person that got me into so many bad situations.

A later realization of this step is that even still, this step can always be worked to get through life on life's terms, when those difficult situations at learn rise,

It helped me learn even more about myself when situations present themselves. Life will always evolve and change, and this step can be utilized any time it is needed. I will always need to continue learning and growing.

In admitting to God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs, in step 5, it became the key to giving me awareness in recognizing patterns within myself and more of the key to freedom!

My sponsor shared things with me that helped me to feel like I wasn't alone and that I wasn't the only one that did some of what I did out there. She didn't judge me. She listened to everything I wrote on that step. It helped me to feel more comfortable in being able to talk about the past and get it out and trust that it wasn't going to be used against me or become gossip. It helped me to trust my sponsor fully and it taught me the importance of doing that for someone else when I became a sponsor.

All of what I mentioned in step 4 above, my sponsor in step 5 explained and guided me through. She was there through the whole process. I learned through her and many of her experiences along the way. My Higher Power works through others and puts us together because we are in many ways, the same. We share so many of the same experiences, just different people and situations.

My Higher Power was also there. In getting honest and speaking the truth, it brought me closer to Him, too. It was the beginning of another tool to build my trust in my Higher Power which also helped me to not be so afraid.

It helped me to feel less hard on myself and it was the beginning of learning to feel accepted just as I am. It helped lessen the burden of holding on to so many secrets that I had previously hung on to for such a long time. What a process that would help to pinpoint those unhealthy patterns and character defects.

It was also probably the beginning of the process of unlearning so many things that so many others in the past said that I should do or should believe in, etc. It opened my eyes to wanting to become free to be who I am.

I can remember my sponsor saying to me to pray and ask my Higher Power to come into my writings before I began (any step writing) and ask to see what is needed. I did that. Then the writing began, and I just wrote whatever came to mind for each of the questions in the workbook for step 4. Down the road when reviewing the writings with my sponsor in step 5, I saw that I had written a lot of things that I did not remember writing and wondering where they came from. My Higher Power truly was with me during this process and reading these things showed me what was needed. It was proof of a Higher Power working in my life. It helped me to build trust in my Higher Power even more!

These are just the benefits of steps 4 and 5 off the top of my head. There are so many more. I can vouch that taking these steps has been worth every second and every emotion, good or bad. It was a great learning and growing experience, and I won't ever regret that time well spent!

-Linda G.

I'm Patty and I'm an addict is the first admission and a continuing reminder of my step 1 surrender. There are two parts to recovery: getting clean and staying clean. Without step one, there would be no recovery. Without step three, there would be no continued recovery! My ongoing recovery is dependent on my relationship with a loving God who cares for me and will do for me what I find impossible to do for myself. Working and living the twelve steps allows me to maintain this process in my recovery. I always have and always hope to go to meetings regularly. They always help me to remember that I'm an addict every day when I wake up. They ensure that I stay in touch with other recovering addicts who have always helped me and continue to help me in my recovery. I have never stopped going to meetings or took a break from my recovery for the wonderful 35 years I've been clean. NA became my new life. It was not a struggle or a difficult thing to do once I surrendered. I always say I've got to have two lives in one. 34 years before NA and a wonderful second life for 35 years now. Truly an addict, any addict can stay clean and find a new way to live! Not only a new life but one with love and purpose; meaning and peace! It's totally true:

Keep coming back no matter what!

-Patty M.

### The Third Step

The third step was and still is everyday for me.

One thing Narcotics Anonymous has taught me, is to embrace a healthy paradox whenever possible. This program has many of them. My personal favorite being "Surrender to Win". Not so long ago, I thought that I knew everything and I wasn't about to give up on myself in hopes of getting better! Besides I served in the military and after two tours in the Middle East, I had witnessed surrender- It was not a positive thing. So for a long time, I tried to get clean or just manage my life my way on my terms because I knew what was best for myself. I know now that I did not know anything. The understanding has come through the process of surrender to the police, to the courts, to treatment and to the rules associated with each. This layer of surrender yielded actual results; active use of drugs had been halted. I quickly realized that I was still imprisoned, only now my thoughts and my feelings were what held me. Surrender had been working so far, why not try it. By taking

suggestions from members of the program, I found myself going to meetings. I started thinking and feeling better. I asked someone to be my sponsor. I became a part of Narcotics Anonymous.

I recently finished formally working Step 3 and what I have learned is that step 3 has only just begun. Every moment of every day is an opportunity to apply this step to my life. I will always have a choice; my experience has been that choosing to surrender works the best. Just for today, I will trust my Higher Power. I will align my thoughts and actions with spiritual principles and I will view the world through eyes of Love.

-Karl N.

### Step 3

The third step was...

Freeing and empowering at the same time. I can now relax and not be "in control" of everything and everyone. I was to let go and Let God and be okay no matter what.

-Adam T.

### My Take on the Dreaded Sixth Step

My step nemesis is the sixth step. I've worked this step several times and while it does provide immense relief, I've found it to be the most difficult one each time. I know everyone complains about the fourth step but to me there is something gut wrenching about step six. To me, I guess looking at character defects is rather intimidating. Nobody wants to admit their shortcomings, yet here we are doing just that when we take an honest look at ourselves. It has become more difficult each time I work it because after doing it a time or two, I feel as if I should have alleviated more of these defects of character. Yes, of course plenty have been prayed about and removed, yet it seems like I add more to the list the longer I've been clean. Could it be that I've become more critical of myself? Sure. But more than likely it is a matter of becoming brutally honest as the time goes on. Several have been lifted and several have been added. It can be discouraging to continuously add more defects the longer I've been clean, but it is honestly somewhat of a relief to get them down on paper, share them with my sponsor and have the opportunity to ask my higher power to help me remove them. It can be shocking, hurtful, embarrassing and just downright uncomfortable to add more to



the list; it is also a reminder that I am a human suffering with defects and not just a terrible human. So, I face each sixth step with an open mind and ask my higher power to guide me on this journey of removing them from my life. If this is your first time working this step, don't be ashamed if the list seems overwhelmingly long. We all have character defects, whether we want to admit them or not. There is definitely a freeing feeling when I get honest and write on this step. I'd like to say it has gotten easier, and I guess in a way it has because becoming aware of my defects has allowed me the freedom to admit them and start to pray to my higher power to help me remove them. Each time through them has been eye opening and for that I am grateful. Thanks for letting me share.

-Kristi S.