



# EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, HOPE

Western Reserve Area Service Committee of  
Narcotics Anonymous

Dec 2016/Jan 2017

## CARRYING THE MESSAGE & PLANTING SEEDS: You Just Might Help Someone

Hi Family! I hope you are doing well during this crazy, wonderful time of year. Everyone is so busy during this holiday season, and there are always adjustments to life when the weather changes. Even so, some awesome addicts have helped to make this issue of the newsletter a success! Trish E. has written an honest, inspiring piece on her journey to find strength in the recovery of other women in the rooms. Jenny K. has resumed her collection of the profound things she's heard in meetings. An anonymous addict has contributed a really insightful essay on the spiritual principle of surrender. Finally, I shared the story of how getting involved in service led to an encounter with an addict who was still suffering. I hope you enjoy the experience, strength & hope contained in these pages! Thanks for reading! In Loving Service, Lisa V.

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. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give. (From the NA Basic Text)

## Do you want to contribute to the WRASCNA newsletter?

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Do you have a talent for writing or creating recovery-related art? The Newsletter Subcommittee is looking for submissions!

We welcome personal stories; writings on our literature, spiritual principles, and areas of service; suggestions to help the newcomer; recovery-oriented poetry; original artwork; and any other expression of your gratitude for our program and way of life.

Please submit items with a clear NA message and NA language to:

[neoLisaV@gmail.com](mailto:neoLisaV@gmail.com) (or call/text 330-612-8678 for a topic to cover)

**Note: Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, or compliance with our Traditions.**

## **SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: SURRENDER**

Surrender is a funny thing. Its implications are weakness and defeat. But in reality it is just a sound decision based on the evidence. The dictionary says in short “cease resistance”, and that sounded awful familiar. I definitely gave up resistance to using. It was glaringly obvious. So I came into recovery with some real experience with surrender of the worse kind.

I liken it to something I learned in a sociology class. When Genghis Kahn would defeat an army, he would make all the people in the town/city he conquered slaves. When Alexander the Great would conquer a people, he would make them Roman Citizens with all the taxes but all the benefits too. Addiction and recovery are like that. When I surrendered to using - I was enslaved, but when I surrendered to NA and what the program had to offer, I gained the resources to be a fully free person.

It took me awhile to catch on to that idea. I didn't understand when someone would share in a meeting to “surrender” or when I was encouraged to do the same. “How?” I would think, or “Could someone demonstrate?” For a minute I was convinced that it was just a dismissive thing to say when someone did not know what to tell me about a challenge.

Today I understand that lack of surrender is just a decision I make to go on suffering. Rebellion is a lack of surrender - and I am a PROUD rebel, but NA is the one place I tow the line. Lack of surrender to the principles and practices of the NA program. I make meetings. I am and have a sponsor - and do the work. I am in service to Narcotics Anonymous - as called for in the 12<sup>th</sup> step. I work steps (and traditions, AND concepts). Even after years of clean time I still deliberately work on step work - as guided by my sponsor. I pray and meditate my way with a personal Higher Power that continues to develop along this journey. When I am doing those five things:

meetings, sponsorship, service, steps work, and prayer and meditation, I am in a state of surrender to recovery.

Some other things that give my surrender meaning is committing to one fellowship. It was posed to me that at some point the research period is over and it becomes time to decide what fellowship I am going to go all-in with.

Traditions are non-negotiable and therefore a reason that it took me a lot of time to understand on a deep level, but what I did understand was being unique in three fellowships was not as meaningful as being a genuine whole person in one. For me it was an easy choice. Also when I am in a meeting I participate, I greet people, I share I help. I have one homegroup but I attend a few meetings regularly - I just don't get involved with their business meetings and decision making: I keep that to my homegroup. I call sponsees when I don't hear from them. My job is to fan the flame and I want to be part of the solution.

## **SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: SURRENDER (cont.)**

Surrender also means, to me, surrendering defects and surrendering to spiritual principles. Just like clean time had to replace using so too does bad behavior have to be replaced with living right according to MY morals - and that takes some getting used to as well. I have surrendered to the idea that the “thing” that worked out my obsession to use is still available to me and if I am honest, open-minded and willing - together we can solve any dilemma for the best outcome.

Surrender takes time and before I can do it I have to get the awareness that there is a problem, then admit it and seek help for it. It deepens the longer I am here and I certainly take back my will from time to time, usually without much thought and not on purpose, but once I get a clue – I know what to do and I am unafraid that I will be abandoned or enslaved.

-Submitted by An Addict

## **BUILDING A SUPPORT GROUP IN NA: HOW ONE WOMAN LEARNED TO TRUST & RELY ON OTHER WOMEN** by Trish E.

When I walked into the doors of Narcotics Anonymous I was more than just an addict in desperation, I was a broken little girl who had no idea that there was a vibrant woman living inside of her. I was fearful of women and had no trust for them because of my relationships with the women in my life growing up. It's been a lot of years and I have just started to build a support group full of women, had I known that getting close to the women in the program would have changed my life the way it has, I wouldn't have wasted any time I would have started sooner. I don't know about all of you but I've been told my whole entire life that I was worthless and useless I believed the lies over the years that whispered into my ear “you'll never be anything”, “you'll never have anything, and no one wants to be with you just for you”. These lies that played in my mind kept me from getting close to women because the voice that I heard was my mother's. Thank God the women in NA love me in spite of myself. It has been mostly the women who have sat and cried with me, held my hand when I felt alone and taught me how to smile when the pain was great. For a very long time I accused the women in the program of being petty and hanging in cliques, and while these things do happen it was really me looking for a reason to avoid them. It was my own self hate and fear that kept me from trying to get to know the women in the program. I wanted to be a part of but did not want to give a part of myself away. The what if's set in...what if they don't like me, what if they judge me, what if I'm not good enough, what if they leave. Let me share that over the past year I have put in time and effort to build relationships with women and I have become more secure in who I am as an individual. I've allowed them to speak life into me and love me. I've allowed God to show me my defects and remove them, and in doing this I have been able to stop judging other women and have begun to focus on me. I've been able to surround myself with women who work the program of Narcotics Anonymous. I'm not just talking about all women I'm talking about women who take their recovery serious who are not afraid to stand up for what's right and tell me the truth about myself on any given day. They have taught me to believe in myself and to look at the woman in the mirror and be proud of what I am becoming. Now let me be honest my support group is filled with women and men, however, the men in my life today respect me and have shown me how to respect myself. This fellowship will allow you to find exactly what you are looking for but remember water seeks its own level. Today I can honestly say I am a strong confident woman who believes in herself. It took years of work and tears but I have finally come to understand that if I want to be a better woman I have to surround myself with women who are getting better. I can sincerely and gratefully say that I'm proud of the women in my life today. Thank you Narcotics Anonymous for blessing me with a life filled with beautiful recovering women, because without all of you I would still be a broken scared little girl instead of the beautiful woman I have become!

## **YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'LL SEE**

By Lisa V.

It's funny how things happen. I hadn't attended an area service meeting for almost 2 years, but there I was. I was filling in as GSR for my home group that month. The plan was to go and get out of there as soon as possible (so I didn't end up in some sort of "Do you have the willingness to serve?" situation.) I should have known that my recovery would lead to a change in my plan.

As I sat in the meeting, I learned something interesting. Addicts in our area would represent NA at various events for International Overdose Awareness Day the following week. I asked the PR chair if he wanted me to set up a table at the event in my town. He said yes, and handed me some IPs and schedules and also some NA posters to give to the representatives at other tables. I also decided to take some key tags with me, so people could have a visual aid showing that addicts can and do stay clean.

By the time I left the area meeting, I was back in service mode. Not only had I volunteered to carry the message of NA at the event, but I had stated my willingness to serve at the area level again. I would be the new WRASNA Newsletter Chairperson, and I was actually really excited about it.

The event was interesting to me. I was grateful that so many people were gathering to raise awareness of the issues surrounding addiction. However, I was somewhat unsettled by the fact that nearly everyone there was focused on one substance. I understood why; this is the drug that had made people acknowledge addiction as a real problem. Still, it was a very different mindset than the one we develop in NA.

At some point, I started talking to a woman who was at the event. I recognized her from my active addiction, since we'd had many mutual friends. I'd only met her once or twice (and neither one of us were clear-headed at the time), so she didn't remember me. She did stay and talk, though, and we sat together during some of the speakers.

As she shared some of her story with me, she organized the key tags from white to black according to clean time. She was in a pretty bad place, because she didn't really think anyone could help her. I told her NA could help, but I could tell she didn't believe me.

We continued to talk, and I found out why. She used a different drug than the one that was the focus of the day. I explained that NA has taught me that it doesn't matter what drug(s) someone used. We focus on recovery from the disease of addiction rather than on specific drugs. We view drugs as a symptom of our disease, not the problem.

Although I don't usually talk about my drug of choice, I did reveal that it was the same as hers. That seemed to give her hope. She met some of the other NA members who were there, took some IPs and a schedule and phone numbers. I offered to take her to a meeting. I really hoped to hear from her, but she never called.

When asked how the event went, I said, "I thought one woman was interested in NA, but I guess not. I think I planted a seed, though." That possibility made the whole day worthwhile.

A few months later, I went to the Dignity At Noon meeting. As the meeting was starting, I noticed a familiar face across the room. I couldn't believe my eyes. It looked like the woman from the Overdose Awareness event, but she looked different. Healthier. Happy. CLEAN!

After the meeting, she told me that she started coming to NA two days after I'd talked to her at that event. She had already gotten white, orange, and green key tags; and she was well on her way to the red one! She had joined a home group, was talking to a woman about sponsoring her, and had been going to meetings nearly every day since I saw her. She chairs meetings and is even on a committee for OCNA.

I've learned something very important: You never know when a seed that was planted will take root & start to grow.

**SUPPORT NEEDED FROM MEMBERS WITH CLEAN TIME & RECOVERY:**

**No Name Meeting**

When Saturdays 9:00pm  
Where 299 Frank St.  
Barberton, OH 44203

**NEW MEETING:**

**Recovery on the Lakes**

When Saturdays 3:00pm  
Where IBH Addiction  
Recovery Center (Therapy  
Building Auditorium) 3445  
S. Main St., Akron 44317

**Do you know of a meeting that needs support? Let us know!**

Email neoLisaV@gmail or  
call/text 330-612-8678 with  
details.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES IN OUR AREA

**WRASCNA Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Marathon Meetings** 50 Marshall Ave., Akron  
Christmas Eve December 24, 2016: Starts @ 9pm & Ends @ 12am  
Christmas Day December 25, 2016: Starts @ 8am & Ends @ 12 am  
--Contacts: Dustin H. 330-571-2961, Alexa B. 330-988-5326, Abigail C. 330-354-2766

Saturday December 31, 2016: **WRASCNA New Year's Dance & Game Night**  
Starts 7:30pm \$5 Admission (No Addict Turned Away) 754 Kenmore Blvd. Akron, OH 44314  
\*9pm Meeting \*Twister, Limbo, Musical Chairs, Recovery Jeopardy & More! \*Bring a newcomer!  
\*Full OCNA 35 Registration Package will be raffled off! Bring in the New Year with good clean fun!  
--Contacts: Dustin H. 330-571-2961 & Alexa B. 330-988-5326

Tuesday January 3, 2017: **Steps & Traditions 6 Year Anniversary** 754 Kenmore Blvd. Akron  
\*Doors Open @ 6pm \*Food provided \*Please bring a side dish & a newcomer  
\*Panel Discussion with a Twist!! --Contact: Trish E. 330-714-1358

Saturday, January 21, 2017: Doors open @ 6:30pm The Only Requirement presents:  
**Pizza and Movie Night: An OCNA Fundraiser**

\*Pizza, Soda & Popcorn \$1.00 each \*Out of Town Speaker @ 7:30pm \*Movie to Follow  
Please join us at The Church on the Boulevard, 754 Kenmore Blvd., Akron, OH 44314  
--Contacts: Mike S. 330-696-9592 & Tony M. 513-344-4966

## HEARD IN A MEETING

by Jenny K

I'm not afraid to show a little crazy in here because I have already been nuts.

A fourth and fifth steps are like digging up the old me and burying it at the same time.

Doing step work and going to meetings is doing something about my problem.

Taking an inventory shows another addict and myself where I don't want to go again.

If I thought I didn't have a problem, the chapter "Who is an addict?" proved me wrong.

The only shame you will have is when you walk out of here and don't come back.

If I'm ever going through some serious pain, I come in and share about it because that helps me.

Everyone can write their butt off but until you apply it to your life, are you really working the steps?

If I wanted to be miserable, I'd use. But that's not why I am here.

How can I stay in the negative space after all the things I've been blessed with in the program?

Some of the gifts we receive from the program are within and that is shocking.

The things that cause us the most pain in recovery are the things I usually like.

The meetings you used to hate you love today. Everything keeps changing.

We can laugh at it now because we recover like crazy!!

Dope may be an option, but my level of serenity is so deep I have so many options before getting high.

It's easier to concentrate on other people's lives and their problems than look at mine.

Recovery and NA has given me the one thing I was trying to escape the whole time, and that was ME.



## WRASCNA AREA

NEWSLETTER

**Email:** neoLisaV@gmail.com

**Newsletter Chair:** Lisa V.

(phone: 330-612-8678)

**Contributors:** Jenny K., Trish E., Lisa V., and an anonymous addict

**Area Website:**

www.wrascna.org

**Ohio Hopeline:**

1-888-438-4673

## WE WRITE OUR LITERATURE

Recovery Literature Project:

TWO pieces of new literature are being created in the coming years, and everyone is encouraged to contribute ES&H, ideas, essays, etc. on these projects:

~An IP on recovery and mental health/mental illness:  
[na.org/mhmi](http://na.org/mhmi)

~A daily meditation project:  
[na.org/meditationbook](http://na.org/meditationbook)

The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2017.

For more information, see the above sites and/or contact your Regional Delegate, Chris M., at (215) 808-3757