

Sanity

September 2007

Newsletter of the New Jersey Region



Feeding Recovery



Seeking new channels to feed our recovery helps us grow. Have you ever felt complacent in your recovery and find yourself missing meetings? If so, consider your options and review Tradition Four*.

This Tradition states: "Each Group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other Groups or NA as a whole." The dictionary definition of autonomous is "self-governing, independent", which in NA terms means that each Group is independent of all other Groups and can set their own format.

If you have been feeling bored in your regular meetings and/or considering missing meetings because of it, take the opportunity to branch out and seek expansion of your network to include different meetings with new faces, new stories, and new experiences. When we continually attend the same meetings, we see the same people and hear the same stories. With hundreds of meetings in New Jersey each week, we should treat ourselves to new horizons as often as we can. The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has enough meetings to meet everyone's needs.

- ❖ **Step Meetings** are very popular and informative. In Step meetings, members read and discuss the Twelve Steps. This is particularly helpful to the newer members of the Fellowship because they can gain insight into how to work the Steps from experienced members. Members with time also benefit from Step meetings, feeding their recovery and giving back what was so freely given to them.
- ❖ In **Pamphlet Meetings**, the members read a Pamphlet, discuss the contents of the pamphlet and give their experience, strength, and hope on the topic of the pamphlet. These meetings are particularly helpful because, although NA has many pamphlets, very few people actually take the time to read every one. Each pamphlet serves a purpose that touches the lives of different individuals.
- ❖ **Open Discussion** meetings allow individuals to discuss any problems or issues that they might have that are affecting their recovery. People are encouraged to free themselves of burdens that may affect their recovery and seek feedback at the meeting after the meeting.
- ❖ **Topic Discussion meetings** cover a topic during the meeting, giving addicts an opportunity to express how they worked through different situations in their lives on a particular topic. The discussion can be conducted with a random topic of the week or the topic can be picked from a 'hat'.

- ❖ **Speaker Meetings** are popular, with the type of speaker meetings varying. Some Speaker meetings have an experienced member of the Fellowship share on a Step and/or Tradition of the week with a discussion of that Step or Tradition to follow. Other Speaker Meetings have the speaker share on a particular topic with an open discussion to follow. Another type of Speaker meeting is to have an addict simply tell their story of experience, strength, and hope followed by an open discussion period.
- ❖ There are also meetings that **discuss the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, or read from Just for Today**.
- ❖ Groups for specific segments of the population are also available. There are **Groups for men, Groups for women, Groups for gay and lesbian addicts**. In New Jersey, there are twelve Groups where the NA format is followed in **Hispaniola** with Espanola literature.

NA has meetings that are **open** to anyone, where we can bring our family members to support us in our recovery, or **closed** meetings that are only available to recovering addicts.

Since each Group is autonomous, some meetings allow people to raise their hands randomly, or the discussion can proceed in a 'round table' manner, going around the room in turn. Other Groups allow the person sharing to pick the next sharer; this is called a Grab Tag. Some Groups put everyone's name into a can and pick names at random for sharing. Some Groups choose to have the format vary from week to week.

Many Groups celebrate cleantime so that the recovering addict who has accumulated some clean time can share their experience with others and help to pass the message of recovery to the newcomer, giving them the hope that we so desperately need in our early recovery.

Therefore, if you are feeling complacent and need new avenues to feed your recovery, please do not stop attending meetings, branch out and keep **seeking new channels to feed your recovery**.

*Tradition Four, Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text, page 63.

Recovery



I found myself in a bottomless pit, of sorrow and woe and despair. When a ray of light revealed to me the steps of a winding stair. In vain I tried to reach those steps, by myself it could not be done. I cried for help and a voice replied, "You are standing on Step Number One." "Who's that?" I asked. "What do you want?" "Can you tell me what to do?" "Give me your hand," the voice answered, and you'll be on Step Number Two." I help up my hand. I decided that I alone could not set myself free. But I trusted that voice and it suddenly said, "You are standing on Step Number Three." I stop there and rest, and look at myself. I don't think I can do anymore. From somewhere above the voice came again, "You are standing on Step Number Four." Wherever you are, you don't understand, I don't deserve to be alive. For I am a liar, a thief and a con. The voice said, "You're on Step Number Five." I'm not well, I'm not right. There's a lot wrong with me, Is there anything you can fix? The voice came again and so gently replied "You are standing on Step Number Six." All right then, I'll ask ~ can you take these away? Can you make me feel closer to Heaven? "I love you," the voice said. "Your Heaven's in you, and you're standing on Step Number Seven." There's so many I've harmed, my family I've hurt-- all the pain and the grief and the hate. "It's alright my child," the voice calmly said, "You are now on Step Number Eight." "You must tell them you're sorry. You must make things right. And then in their eyes you will shine." "I'll do it," I whispered. And then the voice calmly said, "You're standing on Step Number Nine." I must keep a close eye on my motives and self 'cause there's wrongs that I may do again. "Look at you," the voice said, "at how far you've come! You are now on Step Number Ten." I pray and I ask for knowledge and strength. I want to keep my direct line to Heaven. The voice is so close ~ it's as if it's right there, saying "You're standing on Step Number Eleven." And so here I stand, almost at the top. Into all of my past I did delve. Now I want to help others who are still in the pit. And the voice said "This is Step Number Twelve."

.... Anonymous

Committee Updates



The **Phoneline** Committee is working diligently to update the volunteer listings and to overcome some glitches in the system to make it as efficient as possible.



The **Website** Committee has obtained a new service provider in an attempt to make the website as people-friendly as possible. Please visit the website at www.nanj.org



The **Convention Planning Committee** and Board of Trustees have been meeting regularly to plan the Ultimate **NJRSC XXIII** for June 20, 21, 22, 2008, at the Cherry Hill Clarion Hotel. Early Bird Registrations are available for \$10.



NJRSC is in desperate need of volunteers to serve on the **Public Information Committee**. Please consider giving back what was so freely given to you and serve on this committee.

Send input and articles to:

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Please put 'Sanity' in the subject line.

Sanity is published every two months as a service of the New Jersey Region for its Groups and Members. Input and articles are welcome on all recovery related topics.

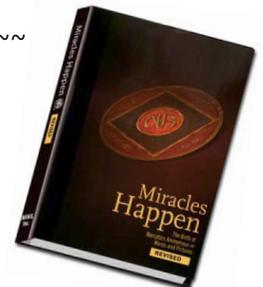
Opinions expressed here are those of individual addicts, not NA as a whole.

Issues of SANITY can be downloaded from the NJ Statewide Website at www.nanj.org

Miracles Happen: The Birth of Narcotics Anonymous in Words and Pictures

This oversized 112-page, full-color, coffee table book chronicles the birth of Narcotics Anonymous in words and pictures.

available at www.naws.org \$26.50



Words of Wisdom:

Don't use and go to meetings.

Editor: **MD**