

# CARRYING THE MESSAGE

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## NA WORLD CONVENTION

Only through the grace of God and NA I was able to attend the 34th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous in San Diego California from August 31st through September 3rd. The conventions theme this year was "Sprit of Unity." I am having a bit of trouble writing this article because words can't describe this convention and the feelings and gratitude I had and still have about being a part of thousands of addicts all together in one place for a true celebration of recovery.

I flew into San Diego Wednesday morning and the weather and scenery of San Diego was something I could only dream of. Without the convention kicking off until later that evening, I got to eat my first fish taco ever (yum!) and learned the public transportation in San Diego during a daytrip to LaJolla Beach. Everywhere you went in the city was recovering addicts and there was a buzz of enthusiasm in the air.

The next evening, after a full day at the San Diego Zoo, we went to the San Diego Convention Center to listen to the speakers that evening. The spirit was flowing and I truly can't describe the feeling I got when thousands of addicts are listening to the message and how powerful and spiritual it was. The next day we ended up with some great seats to the Kenny Wayne Shepard Luncheon where I had to fortune to sit next to a recovering addict from Italy who helped start NA meetings in her country. The concert was amazing and this was my first experience of a concert clean and how fun it truly is without the use of drugs.

Throughout the radius of the convention center there was marathon meetings, dances and concerts (everything from world techno to cover bands). Workshops all day long, hour wait lines for coffee, and addicts celebrating the Spirit of Unity. I got the pleasure of meeting speakers that I have listened to and have helped this still suffering addict. I got to meet one of my sponsor's closest friends who lives in a different state now, I got to meet my friends of friends and most of all I learned that this is a worldwide fellowship and there is an entire world of people just like me wanting to do this recovery thing together, with unity and love whether it's one of my closest friends, or someone I met 10 minutes earlier.

The Saturday night main speakers were a panel of 6 addicts from all over the world. There was a woman from Sweden who touched my spirit because that's where my family is originally from. There was a woman from Japan who shared about the tsunami and the horrifying experiences with the death and destruction in her town, and the hope that she is clean, still recovering and no matter what we don't have to use. Sitting here writing this, I get tears in my eyes about just how much this convention meant to me and my recovery, and I truly hope that everyone gets to experience the gifts recovery gives us when we show up and stay clean no matter what. Grateful to be clean and so grateful for NA.

Love to all.

-Amy J.

## Keep coming back More will be revealed...

I played sports when I was a boy, baseball being my favorite. I knew the positions and all the rules; three strikes you're out, four balls you walk, and hitting the ball over the fence is good, the ball hitting you isn't. As I became an adult, I became a fan. Not because my parents signed me up, but because I thoroughly enjoyed the game. The more I watched and learned the game, the more the game revealed itself to me. There is so much more going on than shows up on the scoreboard or in the record books. There is a game within the game. Actually there are many levels to the games being played within the game. There's the game between the pitcher and the batter, where each are trying to outguess each other, the one who guesses correctly gets talked about on the evening news. The game between the coaches, when a coach signals a steal and the other coach tries to prevent it. There are intentional walks, pitch outs, pick off moves, signs, hit and runs, bunts, and sometimes even batters intentionally hit. The more you go into

the game, the deeper it gets.

One of the things I heard when attending a 12-step group was "Keep coming back. More will be revealed". This saying bugged the hell out of me. I kept thinking "What are these people talking about? There are only 12 steps, and they read them at the beginning of the meeting. What more is there?" However the more meetings I attended, the more I read, the more I listened, the more I learned; the more revealed. There was something deeper being shared, more than written in a book or being spoken.

There is always a deeper understanding, if we're open to it. When we become engaged, alert, present, aware - when we become a fan; we can begin to understand this deeper meaning, what lies beneath. The game within the game. Keep coming back. More will be revealed.

-Chuck

EACH DAY WE CHANGE, MORE WILL BE REVEALED

Recovery involves change and change means doing things differently. "Changing the things I can" is a big part of what recovery is all about. The twelve steps and the power to practice them give us the direction and courage we need to change. We cannot deny that recovery demands active change in our behaviors and attitudes.

As we decide to change, really work to change, then change and seek more change, more will be revealed in the process and we will feel renewed. But what exactly will be revealed? What is that thing we aren't aware about? What has been hidden and not yet exposed? Why do we need to get it revealed? How to do it? When will it be revealed? The answers are simple. We stay clean, work the program and find out for ourselves. No one is going to do it for us.

Recovery is a 'treasure box' that is locked but do we have the key? 12 steps is the key. Each day we use this key, we can open the treasure box and more will be revealed.

-Editor, Newsletter Sub-Committee, Narcotics Anonymous Kathmandu

Editorial

# MY HIGHER POWER

My higher power is loving, caring, bigger than I am and bigger than my addiction. It is a 'warning signal' for me whenever I am acting in my impulse that can destroy me or lead me back to using. It is a 'second voice' in my heart which always seeks well for me. It is 'someone, something' I can believe on to help me in my recovery. It is 'invisible' and 'takes any form'. Sometimes it becomes an NA friend, sometimes it becomes my sponsor, sometimes NA principles, sometimes NA meetings, sometimes my girlfriend, sometimes my family, sometimes literatures, sometimes events in life. It takes several forms to make me aware, keep me in right path and help me grow in my recovery.

My higher power is much bigger than my disease of addiction. It can arrest my disease of addiction and can help me maintain my recovery. It always seeks to improve me and helps me grow. It always helps me identify my wrongs and encourages me to stop whenever I am wrong. It encourages me to continue whenever I am doing right things. It is with me all the time, guiding me in the course of my life. It encourages me to take new steps in my life removing my fear of failures. It encourages me to 'try' things in life and helps me accept the results, whatever it may be. It is something or someone without which I cannot fight against my disease of addiction.

My higher power communicates with me by giving me signs, awakenings and clues. These signs come when I listen to someone share, when I read literatures, when I work 12 steps with my sponsor, when I take some self-inventory. Sometimes it communicates to me through a person, sometimes through books, sometimes through newspaper, sometimes through sharing, sometimes through certain incidents, sometimes through problems and challenges. It communicates to me through so many means and mediums.

I allow my higher power to work in my life by staying open minded and being committed to my third step decision on a daily basis. I need to stay focused on the ways in which my higher power communicates his will for me; I need to be willing to listen to his will all the time. I communicate with my higher power through prayers, meditation, sincere thinking, listening to members sharing at the meetings, literatures, NA service and step work. I need to be committed to these mediums of communication. I need to be in conscious contact with the god of my understanding and search for more ways to make contact all the time. As I know, my growth in recovery depends on that conscious contact, I remain committed just for today.

Today, whenever I pray, "Just For Today, I will have faith someone in NA who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery", I remember my NA friends, my sponsor and MY HIGHER POWER.

-Azay S.

## Everything's OK

What was the best moment that could serve as proof that everything is going to be alright? And how will you incorporate that discovery into the year ahead?

Everything has always been okay. Even when bad shit (being tackled by your best friend's husband) happens, I am OK. The reason that I am okay is because I have done some work on myself, by working the 12 Steps and by going into therapy (more than once in my life.) I no longer fly off the handle and do ridiculous impulsive things. I no longer need to move to another City if someone appears not to like me. I don't know, nor do I need to know, what other people are thinking or what their motivations are. I learned that "No" is a complete sentence. I have a Higher Power that I pray to on a regular basis. I have friends and family. I'm not even half as antisocial as I used to be. My expectation is that, as I get older, and as I continue to recover, I will learn new ways to deal with Life on Life's terms, and to carry on. Sometimes, what it all really boils down to, in the moments when I wonder what I'm doing and is it worth it, and I don't think I can do this (etc etc etc), I remember that when I thought I had HIV, I did not get high. Now, nothing that comes up is a reasonable excuse for getting high. Sometimes my disease tries to tell me it is, but I think, "Nah. I had HIV and stayed clean."

I survived the depths of my addiction, the worst of it involving heroin. I've always been okay. I can't see any reason why that would change now. The more I learn about people, in recovery, and through reading and history, I have come to learn that the human spirit is amazing. People endure, and persevere. I have, and I will again.

Merry Christmas, Happy Festivus and enjoy your holiday.

## The 11th step

The 11th step states that we seek to "improve our conscious contact with God". That statement implies that we already have a conscious contact of said "God" and we're seeking to strengthen that connection. Acknowledging that there is a "Higher Power" is not synonymous with making that contact. How do I know that I've made that connection? I've read, I've written, I've shared with my sponsor on steps 1 through 10. Am I now onto step 11? Well, yes and no. Of course exposure to the 12 steps is ALWAYS a plus as well as a (the) path to making that connection.

My 11th step experience has brought me from a place of believing to a place of knowing. I see now that this connection "we" seek has never been broken. "God" has been trying to get my attention my entire life and now He/She/It has it. I see that the pain and discomfort and frustration in my life do NOT come from a disconnection from a "Higher Power" but from the resistance to a connection that already exists. So, if "God" seems faraway to you, then who moved?

My concept of prayer and meditation has also changed and evolved greatly over the years. In the beginning I thought prayer was a bent knee, folded hands wish list; meditation incense was burning, chime clinking, lotus sitting event. Today, not so much. Not that these methods cannot be effective, they just no longer work for me. Today I see prayer as a state of readiness; the ability to be in the moment and to be present for what "God" has in store for me and to maintain that readiness in spite of situations and circumstances. Meditation is the ability to see "God" as He/She/It happens.

Step eleven allows me to grow every day and get closer to my God's will.



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## 12 Reasons For NA Service

1. We can't keep it unless we give it away.
2. We show our gratitude for the recovery we've found in NA.
3. We recognize that when we heard about NA in treatment or from some other professional, it's because an NA member who came before us did service work.
4. We learn to work with others.
5. We learn to work with difficult people.
6. We are challenged to grow and change if we are to be truly of service.
7. We learn to make mistakes, forgive ourselves and change.
8. We get to see the message in action through the eyes of a newcomer.
9. We learn what it means to have a home, to have friends, to belong and to work together.
10. We become NA; no longer are we on the outside looking in.
11. We learn that even though it takes longer to work with others, the results are greater because of the process.
12. We understand that without service, our recovery would be like a stool that's missing a leg.

## Meeting Etiquette

- If you have to walk in and out of a meeting for whatever reason, wait for a pause in the sharing
- Try not to talk with the person next to you while someone is reading or sharing
- Feel free to do the key tags with a celebratory feel, embrace your joy
- Try not to eat your fruit during the meeting unless you brought enough for everyone
- Have a real moment of silence. Some of us believe we were prayed into the rooms during those 10-15 seconds
- Turn your phone off before the meeting starts. Our lives depend on this life saving message. Put it on vibrate silly
- Be a good listener, people get their feelings hurt when you walk out every time a certain person shares
- Show up early and stay late to get to know one another better
- Share about everything, use over nothing

## 12 lessons of the year past

Feelings are sometimes great, sometimes simple, sometimes painful, even paralyzing in the moment, and sometimes without definition. Feelings will not kill me- Getting loaded will!

Gratitude emerges from the strangest of places, like a shadow after a rainstorm; the lesson often arrives hidden within the storm or behind the clouds. Never forget the light is always in the heart of the humble.

My Ego loves to get my feet wet, Pride keeps them wet as I shiver when the snow begins to fall. The key to staying warm is humility.

Never underestimate the power of my desire to reach for the stars. I am usually the only person surprised by my success.

If the world feels like it has stopped turning, it is probably time to take a few deep breaths and touch the ground so God can get through to my heart.

The program is the black part of the book, my opinion is the white part, and even if I am not paying attention, hope is found in between.

My brothers and Sisters in recovery may let me down and I may let them down. The program is proven, it will not.

Forgiveness is a beautiful thing; breathtaking miracles may take time, yet come easier with acceptance.

My progress usually shines when I am not paying attention. The purity of my progress lies within the person I am when no one is looking.

Intuition is that place between the bottom of my heart and core of my gut. Serenity is what happens when my mind catches up.

If ever I may doubt my Higher Power's ability to perform miracles of magical proportion, my sights are set in the wrong direction, my motives are displaced or impure, and once again I am talking when it behooves me to listen.

And finally, recovery beholds gifts far greater than human measure. As we spread our wings towards new horizons, each of us a miracle. Together as a flock, we will soar never finding an impossible feat. For, along this journey the only path that may defeat us is the one traveled alone.

The Steps are our solution. They are our survival kit. They are our defense against addiction, a deadly disease. Our steps are the principles that make our recovery possible.



# What does "More will be revealed" mean to you? How does it change as you continue this path of recovery?

I took it as a friendly warning as well as a message of hope when I was a newcomer to NA-a warning against my "know-it-all" attitude. A hopeful message of a better life ahead if I stayed clean and participated in the process.

I think it means that we know only a little.

To me, it means that the God of my understanding will continue to reveal to me his love for me.

A better understanding of spirituality.

Goes hand in hand with the whole everything I know is open to revision

More Will Be Revealed... means to me that I need to remain open-minded, willing and honest throughout this process called Recovery. New doors open, lost dreams reawaken and I gain a greater understanding of life, you, the world, and me. I become less toxic and more capable of seeing the bounty before me and more capable of sharing that bounty with others...Peace

The threshold is about learning why I'm still here and how I can change (still do this daily). Today it's more about helping others to hopefully understand the same. Whether I'm all in or not is up to me, if I surrender and do the work necessary then the possibilities are revealed in my HP's time. It's about the journey and the destination.

It means that the fog will lift and you'll be able to see clearly soon.

When I was new, I took it at face value.... keep your eyes open, your ears open, and your heart open and watch what happens. Everything is open for revision. Anything I think I know or

understand, will be revealed to me in greater detail or show me how I've been wrong. I guess that what it means to me today.

It is truly a learning experience and as long as we continue to work a program to the best of our ability we will continually learn in all areas of our lives.

It works if you live it.

In the future I will encounter new information about things and stuff.

It means that as my prospective changes I see things that were previously not in my line of sight. (I imagine the TRUTH standing there and me 'walking' all around it, examining it from many angles) Of course, revelations can only happen to those willing to see/learn/be aware.... I do have to keep noticing what I see - or keep my eyes open - to see/understand better or learn from - what is right in front of me.

Simple, remain teachable!

We never stop learning no matter how many years we have we can always learn something new. Keep coming back and more will be Revealed.

Here's the way it was put to me in early recovery, I didn't understand it, but it gave me hope. I am driving across a field at night. Recovery is like the headlamps on my car; I can see just far enough to drive at that moment. As a drive farther, recovery will light my way ahead of me. I understand it more now, and, so far, it's proven to be true.

Recovery is like a book and each day is a page, just because you've read the first chapter doesn't mean you know the ending!!

## One Promise

Narcotics Anonymous has only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction, the solution that eluded us for so long. We will be freed from our self-made prisons. Living just for today, we have no way of knowing what will happen to us. We are often amazed at how things work out for us. We are recovering in the here and now and the future becomes an exciting journey. If we had written down our list of expectations when we came to the program, we would have been cheating ourselves. Hopeless living problems have become joyously changed. Our disease has been arrested and now anything is possible.

- NA Basic Text, More Will Be Revealed, pg. 102

Sometimes I get so good at the "just for today" thing, I forget where I've come from. I remember, way back when I was struggling to stay clean, not really getting any further than 30 days, feeling completely unemployable, feeling rather hopeless about it all. Everything was a struggle. I was always broke. I was prone to impulsive and compulsive behaviour, often finding myself in other areas of the country (and it's a big country), or in other cities, in fights with people. There was no security, no real way of having any kind of faith that things would be okay, even though they were. I always managed to get away unscathed, still alive, and unarrested by law enforcement. My first sponsor told me that I should dream big, because if I

did this recovery thing, all kinds of unbelievable things would happen. If I dared to dream, some of them, or even most of them, would come true. That's what she told me, and I believed her. At first, my biggest dream was to have my own place. And I wanted a cat and a computer. So there, BAM! I had three. And not long after, when I was sitting in front of the computer in my apartment with a cat on my lap, I thought, "Wow. I think this chick might be onto something." Over the years, I saw some of my dreams turn into reality, and some things came to fruition that I hadn't dared to dream about at all. I embarked on a university education, which I am still working on. I bought my own home, and I hadn't planned that or even asked for a mortgage. My bank asked me if I wanted one. This was astounding, to someone who was constantly hounded by collection agencies, who got credit cards just to get cash advances for dope and then never paid them. Or ... paid them six years after the fact. (Nothing like paying for dope (with interest!) several years into your recovery.) Thank you, Steps Eight and Nine. Anything really is possible. I know a guy who met the man who murdered his brother in NA, and they have made amends. They are not the best of friends, by any stretch, but I've seen them sit near each other in a room. I've seen them hug. To me, the miracles of recovery aren't like that "Secret" thing, where entitled people put up pictures of cars and houses on their "wish boards" or whatever, and a Magic Dude in the Sky grant them whatever they like. The miracles I see in my own and in other people's lives are about healing, growth, taking risks, meeting challenges, and becoming better people. The world rewards that, and other people reward it too. It's not rocket science or hocus pocus. But it sure is spectacular. Bring it on.