



MID AMERICA NEWSLETTER



Volume 31

P.O. Box 8723
Wichita, KS 67202
newsletter@marscna.net

Spring 2013

“We feel that our approach to the disease of addiction is completely realistic for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.” Page 18, 6th edition, Basic Text

A New Way to Live

I am controlling. I am self-centered. I am self-obsessed. I destroy everything I touch. I ruin lives, slowly draining them. I am all encompassing. Every word and every action one might take, I have no preference as to who I will take. No matter your age, your race, or your gender, I will have my way with you. It makes no difference to me if you are the richest of the rich or the poorest of the poor. You will be mine. And do not be mistaken, that very moment that I enter you for the first time, I will own you. You curse my name as you beg for me, but I will show no mercy. I am your own personal hell. I am your addiction.

Addiction destroys lives. It does not just affect the addict, but touches the lives of all those around the addict themselves. It

destroys families, friendships, and communities. Drink it, pop it, snort it, and shoot it. A drug is a drug is a drug is a drug. Make no mistake about this. It turns saints into sinners. But there is hope. There is another way to live life-- A life without the use of drugs.

I have always tried to live my life by a set of principles. When I was a practicing drug addict though, the normal principles I would live my life by became skewed. I put my drug use ahead of my family, my friends, and my children. My life no longer revolved around work, family, and paying bills. Now instead, my addiction became my obsession. Finding ways and means to get and use more is all I could think about. As a practicing drug addict I would go to lengths I never thought I'd go, just so long as I could get

what I wanted. I would do things I would normally never do, just to achieve my goal of having that next high. I would justify and rationalize every action. But once I got into recovery, I realized that I no longer had to live life like that. I found a new set of principles and learned a new way to live. The basic principles of honesty, open mindedness, and willingness now became a new foundation for me to base my life upon.

As a practicing drug addict, I lied. There was no depth to which I wouldn't sink, no lie too big or too small to be told. As long as in the end, I was able to get what I needed--my next fix. Lying was my greatest tool in my active addiction. It was my main means of getting money to support my habit. I remember a time when in the course of one week my family had given me over \$1,500. I told them my fridge had gone out, my stove was broken, and my car needed repaired. Knowing that my fridge and stove worked perfectly fine and I didn't even own a car, let alone one that was broken. It became second nature for me. Never caring who I hurt in the process, never minding what damage might become of it. No matter the destruction one simple little lie might cause, I did it without thinking and without remorse. I lied to my

family, my friends, and my children. I lied to myself. Every day I woke up, every day that I came to, I would tell myself I am not an addict. I can stop at any time. I would tell myself just one more hit, one last drink, and one last line. Each and every day, day in and day out, over and over again, I would lie.

In recovery though, I learned the importance of honesty. I needed to get honest with others as well as with myself. Without honesty, I was nothing more than a drug addict who was just clean. I was a drug addict who was just not picking up. It is a process though. Just as lying was a habit, honesty is a habit too. Habits are learned behaviors, and learning takes time. A process, if you will. Once I quit lying to those around me, I could start telling the truth. Once I quit lying to myself, I was able to be honest with myself. I was able to finally admit I was a drug addict. Honest about my behaviors, honest about my feelings, and honest about my addiction. I no longer justified or rationalized my actions. I was able to admit I put my disease ahead of my children. Whereas before I would say I never stole anything, now I was admitting I stole the most precious and valuable thing of all, time. Time away from my kids, I stole my

children's childhood from them when I made them grow up without a parent, when I made them parent themselves. I was finally able to start being free of the bondage that had held onto me for so long. I took my first step in recovery.

Possessed by active addiction, I became very close-minded. I thought I knew it all and nothing anyone ever said, even registered as a possibility. I knew it all. Anything and everything was all about me. I knew best. At least that's what I told myself and during that time in my life, I firmly believed that. It was my way or no way at all. I ran on self-will and everybody around me was affected; my children, most of all. They no longer had a voice. They no longer had any rights or even opinions. I was Mama Queen and my house was not a democracy, it was a momocracy. Any interference would not be tolerated. I had to make sure I was able to get high yet still maintain running a household. I had to make sure I was still able to go out and get drunk every night. My kids had become an obstacle for me to be able to do that, so I had to have complete order. I would put them to bed, sometimes right after dinner, so I could get ready and go out for the night without any arguments. If I was unable to attain a sitter

for a night, that just meant they had to stay home alone. It made no difference to me. As my disease progressed, so did my behaviors. No longer did I care about making sure they were tucked snug in their beds, I started going out earlier and earlier. My oldest son, being only ten at the time, was now being responsible for cooking dinner. Leaving him to make sure everybody had their bath and got to bed at the appropriate time. He was now responsible for all aspects of parenting.

After getting honest with myself I learned I now had to become open-minded. My way didn't work. My best thinking is what got me into active addiction. I needed help. I learned to ask for guidance. I asked for suggestions from those who came before me and had more knowledge than I did when it came to living life. No longer was I alone. No longer was it all about me. I was now learning what it meant to be a family. I was now learning what it meant to be a mom. I started getting up in the mornings with them. No longer was my youngest daughter getting herself ready for school. No longer was she responsible for making her own breakfast and getting herself on the bus. I had to listen, not just hear, what my kids were telling me. Trial and error were foreign

concepts to me but I was now becoming open-minded enough to listen.

Drug addiction is a very powerful disease. I was so obsessed with my usage that it was the only thing I cared about. I didn't care about going to parent - teacher conferences. Keeping my house clean was definitely not a top priority for me. I put off doing anything and everything that required time away from getting high or going to the bar. Tomorrow was my favorite answer. It was always tomorrow but tomorrow never came. Procrastination was at its best, when I was unwilling, unmotivated, and unresponsive.

Recovery teaches us many things. Willingness is a key factor. Words and thoughts, I learned, had no meaning unless there was action behind them. I started doing the necessary footwork to progress in my new way of life. When a suggestion was given to me, I tried it. There were many times when I fell short, when I fell down. My new motto now became "it doesn't matter how many times you fall, it matters how many times you get back up". Try and try again. I started talking to my kids more. When they would have suggestions about the simplest of things, such as dinner, I would not only let them have input but I would also let them

help me cook it. When my son asked if he could start going to bed later, I had him give me reasons why he should. After coming up with a few good reasons, he got his wish. I was now being replaced with "we". No longer was I being called Mama Queen, I was back to just being called Mom. I became less self-centered and more centered on self. All areas of my life were changing, all because I became willing.

In active addiction I lived by a set of skewed and misguided principles. I had habits and behaviors that the outside world frowned upon. Once I got into recovery though, everything had changed for me. Being honest, open-minded, and willing were the core beliefs that I built my new life upon. I learned these being in recovery but I put them to use outside of recovery. I know, for me anyways, that as long as I keep applying the principles of recovery in my everyday life, my life will be better for it. I know that so long as I continue to be honest, open-minded, and willing, I no longer have to use drugs. I can be free from the chains that active action enslaved upon me. A life of recovery is a life worth living. And living my life is what I am doing today.

Nicole P.

Fun

It has taken years to find out,
What fun is all about?
Was it the chaos I sought in my
youth?
Or simple peace of mind? I
know the Truth!
I searched high and low,
'cause I wanted to know.
Was it the blacking out and not
caring what I did?
Or the joys of watching parents
learn how to care for their kid?
Was it being so shy, I was afraid
to say, "Hi"?
Or coming out of my shell,
daring to try?
Is it sitting in committees and
sharing my knowledge?
Or knowing that since Recovery,
I actually went to college?
The chaos, shyness and blacking
out
Are things my addict side loves
to talk about.
But in Recovery those things
don't matter
Because we don't care about the
former—only the latter.
Fun is all the above!
But most of all—
It is learning how to love!
Kathy F
Unity Area
Valley Center, KS

Sharin' My Hope

I'm stayin' clean the old hard
way
Goin' to meetings every day
Callin' and readin' and stayin'
away from the dope...
'N' sharin' my hope...

My sponsor can't be there 24
hours
So I got to knowin' my Higher
Power
Usin' the program and findin'
some new ways to cope...
'N' sharin' my hope (sharin' my
hope)
Sharin' my hope (sharin' my
hope)

I feel fine I'm 'cause today
serenity's mine And I'm not
slidin' down... that slippery
slope...
I'm sharin' my hope (sharin' my
hope)
Sharin' my hope (sharin' my
hope)

Loving the freedom from active
addiction I've found recovery
and I'm gonna get some Gainin'
the strength to be tellin' the
dealer man "Nope"...
From sharin' my hope (sharin'
my hope)

I feel fine 'cause today serenity's
mine And I'm not slidin' down...
that slippery slope...

I'm sharin' my hope (sharin' my
hope)
Helpin' th' newbies ('n' sharin'
my hope) Workin' the steps ('n'
sharin' my hope) Gettin'
involved ('n' sharin' my hope)

(P.S. I wanted to use "Workin th'
steps"... but you'd be surprised
how FEW words rhyme with
"steps"!!!)

Ed B.
Lawrence, Ks.

The Matchbox

The depth and breadth of the
sadness wore like the full weight
of the universe mistakenly
placed in a matchbox

The matchbox twitched here
and bucked there convulsing
from the infinite volume it
struggled to contain.

At times the sadness paused
just long enough for the
matchbox to reflect on exactly
where and when this woeful
load was placed on its pater,
print, flint soul.

A question that could not be
answered

Clearly, no single slide of its
drawer allowed such a mass
aboard. It would have noticed.

It would have prevented it. It
would have sidestepped, cried,
complained, or explained its
way out of this unbearable cold
dark hell

That left only one possibility.

This weight. This Sadness.

This weight it bore was slipped
in one stick at a time. By
stealth, little by little disguised
no doubt as matches. Until now
finally, the weight of the world,
the weight of the all sadness
from the beginning of time, all
of it, every last bit, every girlish
pout, every women scorned,
every man torn, all sorrow, all
sadness, snuck into its soft
underbelly.

The matchbox felt so
ashamed. What a fool; it had
been. What a jerk, a total and
complete ass it was. What had it
been thinking? What self-
absorbed preoccupation could
possibly allow all sadness, from
all places and all times to slip
into its gut without noticing one
little stick, not one?

Jesus, upbeat is one thing,
positive outlook is one thing,
adaptability, go with the flow,
too cool for school, but the
entire sadness of the
unimotherfrickingverse in its
belly threatening to blow like
some new big bang, some big
bummer bang, about to blow its
little matchbox reality all to hell
and back forever and it did not
freaking notice, not one freaking

stick. Jesus. Let us pray it thought. Let us pray.

God! Hey! If you can't help you better listen. Please!

On the original hand written version of this the ink is stained with tears shed as I wrote it and again a year later as I read it in small group in treatment. I wrote this sitting in my soon to be foreclosed on home, having chased everyone I loved away from me, having lost my job and my ability to even be employable, feeling completely alone and in the depths of addiction knowing no solution other than getting high. It took me several more years to get clean, but I write today with my feet well planted in recovery I found in the God given program of Narcotics Anonymous

Looking back I recognize the riotous self and obsession with that characterized my addictive thinking. Overwhelmed by the negative consequences of my actions I felt my sadness was deeper and darker than anyone else could ever feel. Today I recognize that as a lack of humility and I am aware that I am no better or worse than anyone else. I also notice I seem to be ordering God around. This too is in complete contrast with my current relationship with God.

After coming to NA I realized I was a sick person with an ego problem that made any spiritual progress impossible. Pride and arrogance were major drivers of my using and are character defects I still struggle with today. In working the steps I found a relationship with a Higher Power of my own understanding in which I have faith and trust. I had to take an honest look at my approach to life which was an illusion of control, knowing what was best for everything and everyone, and attempting to manipulate and control everything to my will. This approach to life caused me unending pain and frustration and when at long last I gained the humility to surrender control of the day to day working of my will and life to my Higher Power I experienced my first glimpse of true freedom. Freedom to learn who I really am, freedom to focus on what is right in front of me. On how I am reacting to life, how I am feeling about myself, and if I am being the person I want to be right here right now. I am wilding grateful today for the reprieve I have from the self-created unmanageability just I am grateful for the despair that drove me to my knees and laid bare the truth about what I was

doing to myself and everyone around me.

Don't get me wrong I have by no means mastered the art of surrender and I am by no means recovered. I am, however, committed to recovery and I have the fellowship Of Narcotics Anonymous to show me the way. For me NA has been proven effective by those who came before me and stuck around to show me that it has worked for them. Through working the steps I am encouraged to look at myself honestly, make an honest effort at improving my shortfalls, to put my strengths to good use in service to others, and to seek my Higher Power's will in all things.

Thanks to NA for giving this addict a home and to the MAN for giving me a Voice.

Tim K.

Gift of Life NA
Hutchinson, KS

My Addict

This is my addict. Right now she is resting. It has taken some time to get her settled down. When we first walked into detox she was full of fear, but tired of fighting. She waited a few days, and then reassured me it was ok. So we pushed and pushed to be released. Once out it was a struggle, one wanted to move

forward and one wanted to go back. I had listened to the lies she spoke in my head. After about eight months my addict got her way. But soon there we were, once again, destroying the life we just started to rebuild. I made a decision to turn it over. We surrendered, she was tired. We had turned it over to a power greater than "I" and greater than my addict. So here with almost 20 months clean, my addict sleeps. She is kept calm with the stories of others' experience, strength, and hope. She finds comfort with my writings and drawings. Every now and then she stirs around, but does not awaken. She is my addict. I love her. I know her lies, pain, and struggles. I know her story and one day will share it.

Nette V
8-23-12



Hello Family,

I sit here reading the submissions of this quarter's MAN and I feel both humility and elation. First, I must confess that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. It gives me great pleasure to

publish such beautiful work that can be written by addicts, for addicts. I am the new editor and I have a very enthusiastic ad hoc committee to proof and guidance on the contents of the MAN. This being my first edition it is very special and I hope the readers are as moved as I was to read the articles that were so graciously submitted.

Editor's Note—I hope when the readers read this edition, they become motivated to perform an act of service. A service to share with fellow addicts is the basic tool of our program. For anyone wanting our way of life, we share experience, strength, and hope instead of preaching and judging. If sharing the experience of our pain helps one person, would it have been worth the suffering? We strengthen our own recovery when we share it with others. We help others when we participate in service work and try to carry the message to the addict who is still suffering.

I have learned that I can only keep what I have by giving it away. I was a slow learner in recovery; I thought NA had managed fine without me being involved in service for many years. One day, I woke up and came to the realization that if I did become involved in service at some level that there might not be a program of Narcotics

Anonymous for the addict who woke up that same morning, made a declaration in desperation, "Could it be the drugs?" The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict. There was someone at my first meeting, the first day I walked through the door, ready to answer my questions, answer the telephone, to give me a ride to a meeting, to share their experience, strength and hope with me. I challenge you the reader to commit to service and share your personal stories, songs, poems, and submit them to the MAN.

...To make a submission to the MAN, you do not need to fulfill any clean time requirements, other than 24 hours (rather hear from you and not the drug). Addicts, who submit get ownership in their newsletter, fellowship and become a part of instead of a part from. The MAN is also a viable tool for H&I and PI so take a copy to your group subcommittee meeting and generate some discussion.

Giving back what was so freely given to me...

In Loving Service
Robert C.
Editor

Reprinted from MAN Issue
#3; June-August of 1992

Practicing the Principals

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first.

Personal recovery depends on NA unity.

1. Am I gentle with those who rub me wrong or am I abrasive?
2. Am I a peacemaker or do I plunge into arguments?
3. Am I considerate of NA members as I want them to be of me?
4. Do I share all of me, the bad and the good accepting as well as giving the help of the fellowship?
5. Am I respecting other NA members anonymity or am I into gossip and taking others inventories?

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as he may express Himself in group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

1. Am I seeking praise or credit for my work in service positions? Do I feed my ego?
2. Although I've been clean a few years am I willing to serve my turn at NA chores, setting up and cleaning up?
3. Am I critical or do I trust my group officers, committees, newcomers and old-timers?

4. Am I 100% trustworthy, even in secret with NA 12 steps Jobs and other service positions?

Tradition Three: The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

1. Are there certain types of addicts that I do not want in my home group?
2. Do I judge some NA members as losers or some that I don't believe have a desire to stop using?
3. Do I let religion (or the lack of it) education, sexuality, age or wealth interfere with carrying the message?
4. Do not treat all members of NA equal whether they are doctors, lawyers, or living in poverty?
5. Am I open-minded towards individuals who are court ordered to attend NA?

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.

1. Do I always bear in mind that those outsiders who know I am in NA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved fellowship?
2. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any length –his, not mine to stay clean?
3. Does my group engage in power struggles with other close by NA groups to try and prove “mine is better”?

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry the message to the addict who is still suffers.

1. Do I cop out by thinking “I am not a group, so the tradition does not apply to me”?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a new comer the limitations of NA help? Even if he gets mad because I won’t give him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any member of NA for a special favor just because I am a fellow addict?
4. Do I remember that old-timers in NA can be addicts who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and learn from them?

Tradition Six: An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

1. Should my group list other 12 step programs on their calendar of events?
2. Should my group plan activities with other clubs, groups or organizations outside of NA?
3. Is it good for a group to lease a meeting building?
4. Should a NA group make charitable contributions to a treatment facility or other organizations?

The remainder of this article will be continued in the next issue of the MAN.

I do need to remind our readers that your submissions and service to the NA community will dictate the quality of recovery that will be shared, and the frequency of publication.

I have been asked by several members about the editing of their stories and thoughts. I will not include any submission into the MAN until you, the submitter have proof read any changes in context. The staff may change punctuation to make the story flow easier or to be grammatically correct but not context or content.—Editor

Note: The opinions and views shared in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of The M.A.N. staff, or NA as a whole.





**MID AMERICA
REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE
2013 FEBRUARY QUARTERLY MEETING**

**At the Rodeway Inn
1846 North 9th, Salina, Kansas 67401**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Saturday, February 16

9:00 am-11:00am

Back Room

Main Room

Public Information

Fellowship Development

11:00am - 1:00 pm

Main Room

Back Room

Ad Hoc Restructuring

Campout

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

LUNCH BREAK

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Back Room

Main Room

Literature

Hospital & Institutions

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Back Room

Main Room

Steering

Convention

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Main Room

Fellowship Development

8:30 pm - 11:00 pm

Main Room

Jam Session... Auction & Raffle

NA AUCTION / RAFFLE ITEMS NEEDED

REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, February 17

General business, motions, request for funds.

MEETING STARTS AT 8:00 a.m. and finishes when done.