Experience and Struggle

When asked to write something for this newsletter, I was initially baffled on what to write about. I try not to speak on things I don't know anything about; when I really thought about it, one thing I do feel qualified to talk about is the joy and hope this program gives us. I often say that I feel as if I'm still on a pink cloud. That is not to say I don't experience the struggles that life on life's terms brings, but I simply know how to work through them today.

I was talking to my non-addict sister the other day about feeling overwhelmed. She shared with me that she believes our emotional capacity is like a muscle: the more we exercise it, the stronger it seems to become. I had to agree. This program has given me so much hope. When I begin to examine the struggles I have worked through, I feel empowered. I know I have the ability to take on adversity. I truly believe that as addicts we feel more than most; while stress and grief can feel crippling, it is nothing in comparison to the intense euphoria I can feel when I'm happy. I believe my God gave me the gift of feeling, and that it isn't a curse.

I always wish I could give the feelings of hope, accomplishment and happiness to those I feel are hurting. They are truly feelings that words cannot describe. I can, however, tell you that when I truly feel happy, it is better than any drug I've ever done; to feel that, even for a fleeting moment, is honestly worth working through any struggle life allows me.

-Author

How I Made it to the Rooms

A little while back I got sentenced to treatment. While in treatment I was introduced to NA. NA introduced me to myself and to a loving and caring Higher Power whom I choose to call God. He is the one who had my back when the judge and D.A. were determined to send me back to prison. The NA program has guided me to a spiritual way of living. I can look back at my past and clearly see how God had been watching over me all the years I had been living on the streets, smoking like a broke stove. He is the one I depend on to get me through the day clean and I thank Him at night for doing so. I am no longer caught up in active addiction, so today I have choices and can experience freedom. I no longer have to run or trick mine off by taking one. Because of this new way of life, I am truly grateful.

-Garfield W.
Relapse, Consequences and Recovery

I have relapsed almost a year ago and recently acted off additional bad behavior and consequences of that behavior. I knew coming back that there were people who were going to disparage me, because they didn't want to believe that someone could at 30 plus years could relapse. I knew that there were those who looked up to me/my recovery/clean time who would be angry that I did not meet their expectations. I knew I would be judged and gossiped about. I knew that those who did not like me would use that to justify their dislike. That does not mean that none of that hurt or made it more difficult to come back. But, It also meant that I had to allow others to choose how their reactions. However, having been on this side of a relapse, what I realize for myself is the importance of compassion and empathy. My experience has only reinforced what is stated in What is NA "We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, WHAT YOU HAVE DONE IN YOUR PAST, how much or how little you have, BUT ONLY IN WHAT YOU WANT TO DO ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM AND HOW CAN WE HELP". When we welcome people back, it is letting them know just that, they are welcome, not that it is okay to relapse. Are their consequences for someone’s relapse? Yes, however, if I believe in what I posted above in "What is NA" those consequences should not come from me. Fortunately, most of the people who knew me believed this also and welcomed me back and still love and support me. Separate from the article. I do not know if you allow comments to other articles. I was surprised that the first line of the article "What is The NA Message" was not the NA message or nowhere in the article that the NA message as stated in the Fifth Tradition "That an Addict, any Addict can stop using drugs", lose the desire to use and find a new way of life." That is the true NA message. The single disease concept is the philosophy of the NA program and that method that is used to achieve the message. Anyone who can share the message as stated in our literature is carrying a strong NA message.

- Rich M.

Just for today I will wake up with a smile on my face.
Just for today I know my life is going to change.
Just for today I won’t think about yesterday

Just for Today…
or any other day.
But just for today!....
-Valerie M. (A 17 year old in treatment before her first panel meeting)
A Letter to My Addiction

I am writing you to say: I am done just for today. You have fooled me and played your trick, had me wake up every morning sick. Then everyday you had me going to a clinic far away, drinking my dose from a cup – not even realizing what was up! Then you took it way too far when I had to binge my car. That night while walking to score, I was looking up at the stars but instead of scoring I ended up behind steel bars! Now that I am done, I will admit getting loaded was fun but the price to pay is high, for a habit that will cause you to die. My veins are collapsed and gone. My life of shooting dope has lost its fun. This time I am done.

-Lance D.

A FEW WORDS ON BEST FRIENDS AND CONVENTIONS

Let me take you all the way back to the year 1981 at the San Jose convention. My dear friend of 37 years Vida had been trying to get me to check out the program. The first time she tired she had about 6 months and ended up getting loaded with me (never go alone to help a practicing addict) Next time Vida had 2 1/2 yrs and she came after me well armed with 4 other NA women to bring me to the San Jose convention, I had moved up to SJ and at the time I had not seen Vida for the whole time she had been clean and I missed her. Hack I world have gone anywhere to just be able to spend time with her. Little did I know what a impact that weekend would have on my life and bring two old friends back together again. I knew who Vida was where she came from we used together for many years. Now I looked at this women with friends that were laughing and having so much fun and doing it without taking anything I keep thinking what is this all about no one is using how can this be? I of course had my methadone with me so I didn't get sick the whole time and tired to play the game of "Look at me I am clean too" Right! Anyway Vida introduced me to so many people that lived in SJ I remember her telling me, "Come on this works you don't have to be out there looking in come be with us." after she left It took me about a month to finely start going to meetings in SJ. Little did I know people where waiting for me to come through those doors Vida kept asking them did she come yet? Not yet. Then one night I fixed got all dressed up and went to a meeting in SJ. When I walked through the doors all these people welcomed me people that Vida had waiting for me and that had met me at the Convention, little did I know. I did feel the love and through my fog I got a peek of what it could be like. I didn't understand at the time how could these people want to be around me they didn't even know who I really was. So I went home and for a week and a half my son helped me kick. The next time I went thought those doors I was clean. After three months of going to meetings in SJ and on the week-ends coming back to the Valley and getting plugged into the meetings and people I was ready to come home! So do Conventions and best friends mean a lot to me you bet they do!!!!!!!!

-June L.
May 2013

**Recovery Search**

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**My Poem To The World**

You guided me to the light when I was lost and soulless. Set my heart free when I was blind and hopeless. Thank you oh great ones of this unified spirited group, May I forever be an ingredient of this flavorful and energizing soup. You showed me how to be brave when I was mortified of you and more so me. You released my pain and showed me how to connect the dots in my heart. Freedom, my freedom you gave back to me and showed me how to live. To care have compassion and unconditional love and most importantly how to give. I can claim and profoundly know that I am truly free to be me and no one else. Thank you for showing me that I don’t have to try to be anyone except myself. How empowering this feeling is to know that I don’t have to try anymore. Because to try is to die and there is so much in this life to fight for. My heart goes out to all those people still suffering in their madness. I pray for their freedom and enlightenment on another way to go. This is something that only can be accomplished by the willingness to change and grow. For so many of us this was a long process that seemed to last an eternity. When we arrive at our first meeting in hope, willingness and faith this group touch our hearts and guide our paths to a Great Spirit, Higher Power, or Spiritual perception. This will in turn save our lives give us peace and make us better entities. - Anonymous