



OUR GRATITUDE SPEAKS

WHEN WE CARE & SHARE WITH OTHERS THE NA WAY

newsletter@passaicarea.org

www.passaicarea.org

Something Different

Things sure have changed a lot in my life since I came to my first meeting. Up to this point I had spent my whole life wanting more of this, and a better one of those. I thought if I could just find that magic combination I would feel better about myself and have a great life. For some reason I was always looking for something on the outside to fix what was wrong with me on the inside. Those fixes never helped for very long, after awhile I was bored again and moving on, still looking. The changes in my life I was talking about didn't come from man made stuff, working the steps helped me to find something different, a more spiritual way of living.

Our steps have many references to God, after all this is a spiritual program. In one form or another, six of our twelve steps mention a Higher Power. The second step says "we came to believe", in the third step "we made a decision to

turn our will and our lives over". These steps are not mere suggestions, they are not written in a way that allows us room to wiggle out of the commitment we are being asked to make.

By surrendering self will we gain the strength to learn how to live. It has taken some time but in the second step I found a Power greater than myself to believe in, and in the third step I finally made a decision to turn it over. By working the fourth step the "exact nature of my wrongs" came out so I could admit these things to God in the fifth step, and in the seventh step I could "humbly ask Him to remove" them. The next three steps help me put the past right, and keep myself in check for the present. After all the help I have gotten from the God of my understanding, I need and want more.

Time for the eleventh step. In the process of working the first ten steps I found out that without a Higher Power in my life I will never be the person I

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January 2010**

want to be. I need to improve the relationship I have with my Higher Power. I am just now learning how to pray and I still tend to be selfish, even in the way I pray. I am an addict, I want things my way, I want it now. Sound familiar? This step is asking me to seek only God's will, after all, when I run on self will I mess things up; so why would I want to do things my way?

In the first step I admitted the fact that I was powerless, now here is the chance for me to gain power, the power to carry out God's will. Now I've found something that is really different.

Joe Addict

**Calling all recovering addicts;
We need your stories, poems,
experience, strength, and hope.
Send your submissions to:**

newsletter@passaicarea.org

Dear NA member

We hope you will find personal growth, understanding, and empathy in this Passaic County Area Newsletter. We pray you will be moved to a new level of insight into your recovery and the valuable place you occupy as a member of Narcotics Anonymous. The purpose of our newsletter is to invite members to engage in a journey of recovery. We believe that these stories are presented in a manner that encompasses the diversity of our fellowship and is reflective of the spiritual awakening described in our Twelfth Step.

In Loving Service:

Dennis B. / Editor

Geoff C. / Copy Editor

Danny G. / Reporter

Iris G. / Secretary

The full fruit of a labor of love lives in the harvest, and that always comes in its right season... Basic Text pg. xi

“Waking Up To A New Beginning”

"All spiritual awakenings have some things in common. Common elements include an end to loneliness and a sense of direction in our lives."

(Basic Text p.28)

We hear a lot of talk in recovery about spiritual awakenings. As newcomers, we sometimes wait with anxious anticipation as we work through each step, eager to get to the spiritual awakening promised in the twelfth step.

We sat in meetings hearing others share about the spiritual awakenings they have had. We wonder if our awakening will be like theirs. Or if it will be different. If it is different, then how will we know that we have truly had a spiritual awakening? And exactly what is a spiritual wakening?

Perhaps one of the most wonderful aspects of this program, and one of the main factors that allows it to work for anyone who is willing to work it, is the fact that the personal aspects of this program are not carved in stone. They are just that. Personal. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. No one can decide whether or not another has the desire to stop.

Only that individual can decide for his or her self. There are many ways to work the steps. We are encouraged to work them in order, write them down, and allow ourselves to be guided by someone who has experience and knowledge in working the steps. Beyond that, it's our choice how we choose to go about it, as long as we learn to apply the principles of the steps to our lives. We are also encouraged to find a God of our understanding. A Higher Power that is revealed to us personally.

All of these things are of a personal nature. And should be kept to the individual to experience on a personal level. Otherwise, they will simply be mimicking what has been dictated to them, and will not allow the spirituality of the program to reveal itself to them. Each of us must experience these moments of clarity on our own. We can share them with others, we can even use them as a basis for our guiding of others through their own awakening. But we should never compare our spiritual wakening with that of someone else, whether it's feeling jealousy because our awakening experience doesn't seem as grand as theirs, or feeling superior because we think our experience is much better than theirs.

A spiritual awakening is not a one time event. It is a series of personal moments throughout our recovery that enlighten us and bring us closer to an understanding of the true spiritual nature of our own personal program. I should be grateful for each "awakening" I have, for that means I am still moving forward in my recovery.

Ken H.

It's A Celebration:
Never Alone Again is having
their 6th year anniversary.
Jan. 30th 7:00 pm
352 Clifton Ave. Clifton, NJ
2 Speakers, Group History,
Clean Time Count Down, Food,
Fun & Fellowship.
All are Welcome.

It's Been Awhile

**IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I
CRIED,
EVEN LONGER SINCE I INTEN-
TIONALLY LIED.
IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I
MISUSED
AND LONGER SINCE I LET
MYSELF BE ABUSED.
I NO LONGER DEPEND ON
NUMBNESS OF DOPE,
I NO LONGER HEAR VOICES
SINCE I LEARNED TO COPE.
NO LONGER RUN FROM AN
IMAGINARY SHADOW,
I HAVE A ROAD TO WATER I
MUST FOLLOW.
I NO LONGER CHASE THE
ONES THAT ARE DEAD;
IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I
GOT LOST IN MY HEAD.
I FEEL THIS SERENITY IN MY
SOUL'S CORE,
MY HEART FEELS CONTENT
LOOKING FOR THE DOOR,
THAT DOOR OF RECOVERY
FROM MY PAIN,
IT'S BEEN AWHILE, I TELL YOU,
SINCE I FELT THE SHAME.**

**IN DEDICATION TO THE
ADDICTS WHO STILL SUFFER
AND REMAIN FEELING THIS
PAIN**

**YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO
PRETEND IT DOES NOT HURT**

BY CARLOS D.



Release Form

The following release form must accompany all submissions to
“Our Gratitude Speaks Newsletter”
Mail to Passaic Service Area P.O. Box 2226 Clifton, N.J. 07015-2226

I hereby give **Our Gratitude Speaks**, their successors, assignees and those who act in their authority permission to publish the attached article or other written material pertaining to my personal experiences with or opinions about the NA fellowship or program. I understand that my material may be edited. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release **Our Gratitude Speaks** and the **Narcotics Anonymous fellowship** and its service board and committees from any claim by myself, my successors and / or assignees.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Witness: _____ Date: _____

The opinions expressed in Our Gratitude Speaks do not necessarily reflect the opinion of any member of the Newsletter Committee or that of NA as a whole. All submissions become the property of Our Gratitude Speaks whether or not you sign the release form. Submissions may be edited for length, language and adherence to the 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

Passaic County Area Service meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month on the corner of Crooks and Lakeview avenue in Clifton, NJ. Policy meeting starts at 12:00 pm, Area service starts at 1:00 pm with a Workshop. All NA members are welcome to attend.

Passaic County Area Subcommittees Contact Information:

H&I: handi@passaicarea.org (2nd Sunday of the month @ 460 Lafayette ave. Hawthorne, NJ @ 10: am)

PI: pi@passaicarea.org (1st & 3rd. Friday of the month @ 460 Lafayette ave. Hawthorne, NJ @ 7:30 pm)

Activities: activities@passaicarea.org (2nd. & 4th Tuesday of the month @ 17 Pompton ave. Pompton, NJ @ 6:30 pm)

Website: webmaster@passaicarea.org

Workshop: workshop@passaicarea.org

Policy: policy@passaicarea.org

Literature: literature@passaicarea.org

Newsletter: newsletter@passaicarea.org (January .to March -3rd Tuesday of the month) (April to July / 2nd Tuesday of the month) @ Crooks & Lakeview ave. Clifton, NJ. @ 5:30 pm.

WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?

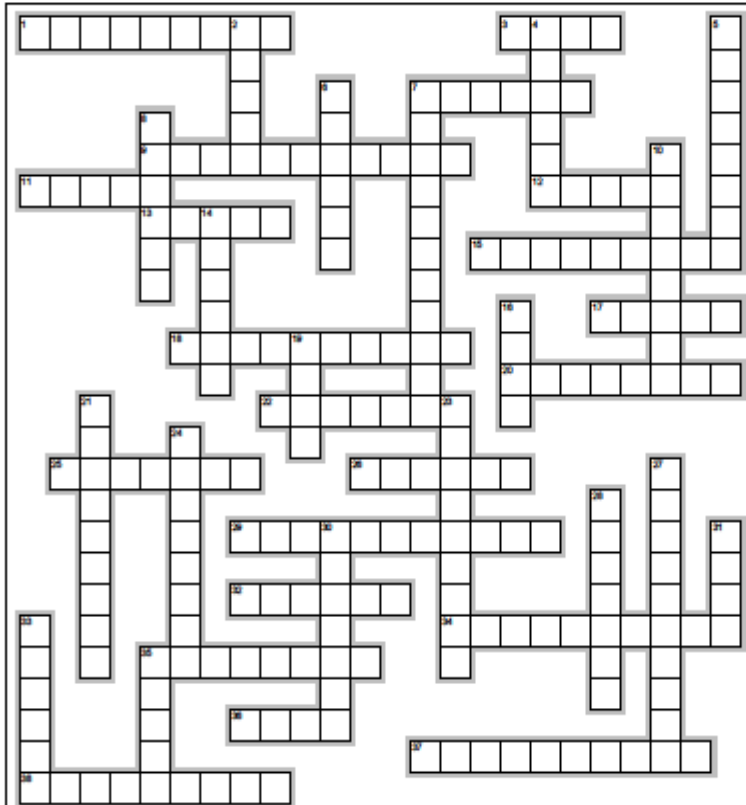


**Trusting the NA Way:
Reading the Literature**

If we are unwilling to listen to others, we will deny the need for improvement. We learn to become flexible and to admit when others are right and we are wrong. As new things are revealed we feel renewed. We need to stay open-minded and willing to do that one extra thing, go to one extra meeting, stay on the phone one extra minute, and help a newcomer stay clean one extra day. This extra effort is vital to our recovery. (Basic Text page 98)

January 2010 Issue:

Step Three "It Works"



Learning to use our literature helps us stay clean, the solutions are always in there.

Down

2. "Working Step Three only in certain _____ of our lives short-circuits our spiritual development." pg 31
4. "Recovery doesn't _____ us from having to live through painful situations." pg 33
5. "_____ is a process of discovery." pg 33
6. The relief we experience as a result of working the first three steps is only a glimpse of the _____ we can experience through working the Twelve Steps." pg 34
7. "We develop this _____ over time." pg 26
8. "Step Three doesn't free us from having to take _____, but it does liberate us from excessive worry about the results." pg 31
10. "In Step Three, we put our belief in a Higher Power into action, making a _____ to turn our will and our lives over to the care of the God of our understanding." pg 26
14. "We are making a serious _____ to live differently than we have in the past." pg 28
16. "There is more _____ to do." pg 35
19. "Or we may wonder what will happen to us if we place ourselves in God's _____." pg

21. "Most of us ask our Higher Power for _____ on a daily basis." pg 30
23. "Our sponsor will guide us in applying the _____ principles of recovery, showing us how to shift our focus away from our own self-interest and toward a more spiritually centered life." pg 29
24. "Self-will is composed of such characteristics as closed-mindedness, unwillingness, self-centeredness, and outright _____." pg 26
27. "The Third Step is our _____ to our own emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being." pg 27
28. "We can easily lapse into old behavior; it takes determination, time, and _____ to change." pg 27
30. "We learn that we don't have to be _____ to live a spiritual life." pg 34
31. "Relinquishing control is not _____, but we can do it with help." pg 32
33. "We notice a gradual _____ in our thinking." pg 33
35. "We begin to _____ differently to the situations and people around us." pg 32

All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Step Three pg 26 - 35

Across

1. "_____ to working the Third Step is our willingness to allow the God of our understanding to work in our lives." pg 26
3. "Acting on our self-will has kept us trapped in a continuous cycle of _____ and pain." pg 26
7. "We were always on the lookout for ways we could force things to go as we _____." pg 27
9. "No one can do it for us; we must _____ decide to do this for ourselves." pg 29
11. "We learn to let go and _____ the God of our understanding." pg 28
12. "This is a twelve-step program, not a _____-step program." pg 35
13. "Our attitudes and _____ become more positive." pg 33
15. "Our lives are guided by our emerging _____." pg 34
17. "We rely on our _____ and believe that this decision is one of the best decisions we've ever made." pg 29
18. "Because we have made the decision to allow spiritual _____ to work in our lives, we may notice a sense of relief." pg 32
20. "We can grow in spite of our pain or, perhaps, in _____ to it." pg 33
22. "For some of us, deciding to turn our will and lives over to the care of the God of our understanding is a _____, not an event." pg 32
25. "With our _____, we ask a Power greater than ourselves to care for us." pg 30
26. "We _____ to work this step thoroughly." pg 32
29. "We are _____ for our recovery." pg 31
32. "The _____ for a God of our own understanding is one of the most important efforts we will undertake in our recovery." pg 30
34. "We savor the laughter and the joy we hear expressed so _____ in our meetings." pg 34
35. "The decision we make in Step Three _____ that we move away from our self-will." pg 26
36. "As we experience this new way of life, we begin to realize that recovery is a priceless _____." pg 34
37. "When we are tempted to _____ a situation, we recall this decision and let go." pg 32
38. The decision that we make by working this step, and the relationship that results, will revolutionize our _____." pg 27

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