

Sierra Foothills Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Newsletter - October 2016



This month's SFANA Newsletter's theme is Ten. The Tenth Step and the Tenth Tradition. Enjoy.

Step Ten

Submitted by Jeannie C.

"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

In working Step Ten we get to incorporate the principals of self-discipline, integrity, willingness, honesty, humility, surrender and perseverance.

"In the Tenth step, we use all the principals and actions we learned in the previous steps, applying them to our lives on a consistent basis. Beginning our days by reaffirming our decision to live life according to our Higher Power's will has helped many of us keep spiritual ideals foremost in our minds throughout the day. Even so, we are bound to make mistakes that are very familiar to us. We can attribute virtually every wrongdoing to a character defect we identified in the sixth step. Humbling asking the God of our understanding to remove our shortcomings is just as necessary now as it was in the Seventh Step." *It Works, How and Why*, page 97

In working a daily tenth step, I get to become aware of my thinking, my patterns of behavior, my fantasies, motives, actions and reactions and the way my life is affected by these. What a

gift to have the willingness to take a look at myself each day. I have found that during difficult times, the Tenth Step can be a sort of pressure releaser. We all face difficulties in life and sometimes the difficulties can and do effect my thinking, my interactions with others and my connection to a Higher Power. There are times, when old patterns of behavior become current patterns of behavior and I would rather escape into fantasy or some other form of compulsion that will provide temporary relief from a painful or challenging situation. But I did not come to Narcotics Anonymous to remain in the darkness of addictions. I came here to become free. And the longer I am here, the less willing I am to remain chained to a compulsive behavior that interrupts my spiritual connection. I feel much better when I listen to my conscience.

So, the Tenth Step helps me catch those unhealthy patterns of behaviors, thinking and character defects that may crop up in everyday life. It's like an insurance policy to my daily reprieve from active addiction. I don't know about anyone else, but if I don't take a look at myself daily, then I can easily delude myself into believing everything is great with me, when in fact, I may be flirting with engaging in behaviors that harm my spirit. And when I harm my spirit, it is only a matter of time until I pick up to try and feel more comfortable in my skin again. It's weird how the lie of addiction never changes. It tells me the same ridiculous nonsense time and time

again, but perhaps in different ways. It tells me that I can engage in a harmful behavior and that it won't affect me. It tells me that this time it will be different and that this time the situation justifies such behavior. Then, once again, when I am left with only the reality of the lies, using a drug might look like a solution.

One of the things I am most grateful for in NA is the literature. We have a wonderful selection of books to help us with our daily inventory. The How and Why provides a guide to questionable behaviors. On page 100, we read, "There are other times in our lives when we find ourselves in a situation that seems to require a compromise of our personal beliefs and values. For instance, if we had gained employment at a company only to discover that our employer expected us to indulge in questionable business practices, we could reasonably expect to feel confused about the choices available to us. Deciding what to do about such a dilemma, might be a tough decision for any one of us. We may be tempted to make a snap judgement or expect our sponsor to provide an easy answer; however, we have found that no one can solve such a dilemma for us. While our sponsor will provide guidance, we must apply the principals of the program for ourselves and arrive at our own decision. In the end we are the ones who must live with ourselves. In order to do so comfortably, we must decide what is, and what is not, morally acceptable in our lives."

The basic text relates on pages 43 and 44, "We need this step even when we're feeling good and things are going well. Good feelings are new to us and we need to nurture them. In times of trouble, we can try the things that worked during the good times. We have

a right to feel good. We have a choice. The good times can also be a trap: the danger is that we may forget that our first priority is stay clean. For us, recovery is more than just pleasure."

"We need to remember that everyone makes mistakes. We will never be perfect, However, we can accept ourselves by using Step Ten. By continuing a personal inventory, we are set free in the here and now, from ourselves and the past. We no longer justify our existence. This step allows us to be ourselves."

We have a wonderful tool in IP number 9, "Living the Program." This IP makes the daily inventory very easy for us. The forty-four questions (yes, 44) are separated into six main categories that will help us pin down if our thoughts have been on recovery for the day, if we are putting faith in someone in NA who can help us, if we are following the program to the best of our ability, if our perspectives on life are changing, and if we are living life unafraid. Use it! It's a very valuable tool.

"Working the Tenth step makes it possible for us achieve more balance and harmony in our lives. We find that we're happy and serene much more often than not. Feeling out of sorts becomes so rare that, when it does happen, it's a signal that something is wrong. We can readily identify the cause of our discomfort by taking a personal inventory."

"The personal freedom that has been building since we began working the steps yields an increase in our choices and options. We have total freedom to create any kind of life we want for ourselves. We begin to look for the meaning and purpose in our lives. We ask ourselves if the lifestyle we have chosen helps the still-suffering addict or

makes the world a better place in some other way. What we are searching for, we will find in the Eleventh Step." The NA Step Working Guide, page 103.

TRADITION TEN

"NA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

Having an opinion is having an opinion. It doesn't matter if we fight for what is "socially acceptable" or unacceptable. Any type of opinion, used in conjunction with the words Narcotics Anonymous creates public controversy. In this case, it does not matter who is right. It does not matter what is right. What matters is that it is none of NA's business. It is difficult for addicts not to share our opinions. We must respect this Tradition and do this in our own NA family in a way that does not become available outside of NA. We do not encourage our members to wear NA shirts at political rallies, public or commercial events or occasions involving the press or media. This would indirectly make a statement. We need to encourage respect for our fellowship. Sometimes a member in a tee shirt or with a sticker on his car is the only thing society sees. If we allow ourselves to express an opinion while carrying an NA logo, this endangers NA as a whole. Perhaps only a little bit, but that little bit can make a big difference. Already our combined goodwill, ability to keep Fellowship commitments is helping us carry our message into areas where we just weren't welcome that long ago. Sometimes it is hard to see the benefits of doing the right thing, but as we come

to ourselves, we begin to see patterns forming in our lives to take the place of ego, pain motivation, suspicion, greed and all the other self-limiting strategies addiction had rooted in our lives. You can't get a job at the bank if you steal money. We must surrender to this Tradition in our personal lives for the benefit of the integrity of NA as a whole.

One addict shared what many feel, "I am grateful that NA isn't involved with the politics and other issues of society. NA is a spiritual way of life and I feel this would be severely compromised if we let our opinions or non-recovery issues effect the groups in any way."

In order for us to recover, it is imperative that we be able to "focus" on recovery alone. The disease is always trying to defocus us so that we cannot concentrate all our energies on recovery. We suffer from a disease of spiritual deficiency and in order to achieve integrity the atmosphere of non-duality must be maintained in our groups.

The Tenth Tradition is vital for our growth and spiritual well-being as a Fellowship. We cannot afford to be categorized or labeled by taking positions on outside issues. Public positions may attract some, but they would invariably alienate others. By remaining neutral on outside issues within the larger society, we are accessible to the broadest base of addicts. We do it this way so that no addict seeking recovery need ever die. As lofty and distant as that goal may seem at times, we can have it if we are willing to pay the price, don't back off and don't get side tracked.

The Tenth Tradition warns us about public controversy. Public controversy is to be avoided because it always damages us as a Fellowship by

diverting associations away from recovery for addicts. When someone out in the world thinks of NA, we want them to think of caring addicts who live clean. They don't really need to know our politics, our income level, our associations, and most important, our opinions on everything. Year after year, we have to let new members working in the sensitive areas of Public Information know they are not to use their last names with the press as NA members, not to address outside issues and not to respond to a reporter outside our area of responsibility. By being responsible, we make it possible for others to find out about NA, get to our meetings and achieve freedom from active addiction.

Internal controversies have been with us from the beginning of our Fellowship and are not necessarily negative. NA has often grown and matured through controversy. The Tenth Tradition distinctly applies to outside issues and public controversy outside NA. It is not meant to be used as a means to avoid involvement in our Fellowship. Many problems will not go away until members are willing to make a stand.

One member shares, "When our world office chose to launch a lawsuit against an individual member in 1989, it was viewed as an inside matter. Members reported overhearing lawyers discussing our 'case' during a commercial airline flight. We have not invisible to the outside world. To a certain extent, we are on candid camera. To pretend otherwise is fantasy."

This Tradition refers to "outside issues." Recently, many members have wanted us to take medical and socio-political positions on issues of racial prejudice, tobacco smoking and treatment for addiction. We must be

careful. Stating opinions on these issues in the name of NA can be dangerous. Even the safest generalizations can be harmful. Are we doctors, lawyers and experts? If we are in our own right, let it be kept apart from our membership! It is so easy for an addict to be gulled into making rash statements on the air or to the press. We just have to repeat the warnings until they are heard. And, most importantly, members have to be trained and instructed in these matters by us; there is no one else to do it. When we don't do our job, we insure failure and confusion for Fellowship events and projects. When we have taken our turn at running things, it is all too easy to back off and let others rush in and take over. If they fail, is it their fault if we didn't set it up with a strategy to pass on what we had learned before turning the effort over to them? Think about it. Pray about it. It is your Fellowship.

What about "inside issues?" These are expressed as our experience, strength and hope on recovery, in our group conscience literature process. Our opinions on service and Traditions are expressed the same way. The word "conscience" is more accurate than the word "opinion" to describe this because it includes the spiritual component.

NEWSLETTER CALL FOR ARTICLES

The area staff at SFANA are publishing a monthly newsletter and would like two things from you:

1. Sign in by filling out the form on the website so that you receive the SFANA Newsletter in your email the moment it is published.
2. Submit articles and stories to be published in the SFANA Newsletter to

inspire others to stay clean and keep coming back.

Some topics that would be useful in the SFANA Newsletter are:

- What is your favorite recovery quote and why?
- What is your favorite spiritual principle and why?
- What is your experience with children at meetings?
- Does being productive and responsible mean being boring?
- How do you develop healthy intimate relationships?
- How does your gratitude speak?
- How do you continue to make amends? Are you ever finished making amends?

ENTER THE LOGO CONTEST

We are having a logo contest for the Sierra Foothills Area of Narcotics Anonymous! Get your creative hat on and submit a logo. To enter just fill out the comment field below – explain your logo and its meaning. Then upload your logo artwork using the file upload button. The winner will receive two tickets to the next activities event.

If you look at the home page you will notice the NA logo in the upper left of each picture in the slider. That is where the winning logo will be featured in the website. If you have what you think is a really good idea for a logo, but don't have the graphics ability, or the equipment, to create it, ask for help. That's what it is all about, one addict helping another.

Your logo artwork needs to be one of the following formats: PNG, GIF, JPG, and JPEG

If you, or someone you know, has a problem with addiction please call the helpline at: **(530) 645-1635**