

Sierra Foothills Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Newsletter - February 2017



This month's SFANA Newsletter's theme is One. The First Step and the First Tradition. In addition, a new section has been added to the newsletter – Events around the Area. Enjoy.

Events Around the Area

The events calendar for the area is blank for this month so far. If there are any group activities, get the information to: newsletter@sfana.org so we can have the website updated.

Step Two

“We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity”

“The second step is necessary if we are to achieve ongoing recovery. The first step leaves us with a need to believe in something that can help us with our powerlessness, uselessness and hopelessness.” Basic Text, page 23.

Oh boy, did I ever have a difficult time surrendering to the fact that what I was doing was insane. I had a ton of evidence. It was evident every morning when I woke up, made a new resolve to stay clean, yet found myself high by noon. Though I was unable to see the progression of the disease, it was evident in the decisions I made. Things I never said I would do, I did. My self-esteem

and self-worth diminished with each new round of demoralization. As the rationalizations and excuses piled up, my denial grew a life of its own. It became like an ever-expanding soggy blanket, moldy and disgusting as it grew to cover the mountain of denial.

I was so removed from my emotions that I lost the ability to recognize that I was miserable, lonely, isolated, fearful and that I ran in the same patterns without getting anywhere. I repeated the same things, over-and-over again. I did expect different results at first, then the running became a way of life. I knew what to expect and simply accepted that life was just like this for me. It was no big deal. It was just how it was.

My thinking became increasingly paranoid and self-centered as my ego gathered and consumed increasingly larger parts of my life, until I had no life left. I remember thinking that everything that happened around me and sometimes the whole world, was about me. My ego was either over inflated or it was telling me that I was worthless and that I could never change, so why try?

“Now that we've finally admitted our insanity, and seen examples of it in all its manifestations, we might be tempted to believe that we are doomed to repeat this behavior for rest of our lives. Just as we thought our active addiction was hopeless and we'd never get clean, we now believe that our particular brand on insanity is hopeless. Not so! We know

that we owe freedom from active addiction to the grace of a loving God. If our Higher Power can perform such a miracle as relieving our obsession to use drugs, surely this Power can relieve our insanity in all its forms.” Just for Today, page 377

“Many of felt that insanity was too harsh a word to describe our condition. However, if we take a realistic look at our active addiction, we’ll see that we have been anything but sane. For the most part our perceptions were not based in reality. We viewed the world around us a hostile environment. Some of withdrew physically and had little, if any contact with anyone. Some of us went through the emotions of life, but allowed nothing to touch us emotionally. Either way we ended up feeling isolated. Despite evidence to the contrary, we felt that we were in control. We ignored, or didn’t believe the truths that were staring us in the face. We continued to do the same things and expected the results to be different. Worst of all, was the fact that we continued to use drugs regardless of the negative consequences we experienced. Despite the warning signs that our drug use was out of control, we continued to justify it. All too often, the result was that we could no longer face ourselves. When we take a realistic look at our lives, there can be no doubt that we desperately need a restoration to sanity.” It Works, How and Why, pages 18 & 19

I had always believed in a Higher Power. I remember lying on the grass as little girl and looking at the clouds pass and talking to my Higher Power. I was involved in various spiritual practices though-out my young life and I loved the contact I felt with my Higher Power. In active addiction, that relationship diminished. I failed to recognize the

countless times this power had literally saved my life, and my relationship with Higher Power was nonexistent. I was too busy feeding my addictions to take the time to even consider Higher Power. It took several years of recovery before I could even remember all the times my Higher Power had my back while I was using. I am so grateful today! I was in countless auto wrecks where I should have died. I had guns go off next to my head. I saw several friends overdose and a few die. I continued to pump drugs into my system without any regard for my life. I put myself in countless dangerous situations with very dangerous people. But my Higher Power wanted me here. And that power, the one that coved my back and saved my life is the one that has my back today. I don’t need more evidence that I absolutely must rely on a Higher Power to stay sane, safe, and happy. So, I came to believe once again, in my Higher Power. I am smiling as I write this and tears of gratitude sting my eyes.

I am being restored to sanity one-day-at-a-time with each decision I make in truth. With each decision to live clean just for today, with each risk I take to fully embrace life, with each act of self-less service, with each smile I extend to a new comer or a stranger; with each decision, I am regaining deeper sanity as my relationship and reliance on my Higher Power grows

“The only suggested guidelines are that this Power be loving, caring and greater than ourselves. We don’t have to be religious to accept his idea. The point is that we open our minds to believe.” Basic Text. Page 24.

“The process of coming to believe is similar for most addicts. Most of us lacked a working relationship with a Higher Power. We begin to develop this

relationship by simply admitting to the possibility of a Power greater than ourselves. Most of us have no trouble admitting that addiction had become a destructive force in our lives. Our best efforts resulted in ever greater destruction and despair. At some point, we realized that we needed the help of some Power greater than our addiction. Our understanding of higher Power is up to us. No one is going to decide for us. We can call it the group, the program, or we can call it God.”

“As we see coincidences and miracles happening in our lives, acceptance becomes trust. We grow to feel comfortable with our High Power as a source of strength. As we begin to trust this Power, we begin to overcome our fear of life.” Basic Text, pages 24-25

“As we gain more and more confidence in our spiritually, we become more willing to improvise, not only in our spiritual practice, but in the way, we live. We become willing to do the right thing and let go of fear. We go from simply showing up and reporting for duty each day to a willingness to serve the greater good in the best way we can. We start by following suggestions, and progress to doing the right things for the right reasons. We can stop there-but if we are willing to strive for more, we have the opportunity exceed our greatest expectations for ourselves. Our experience settles a lot of our ambivalence about spirituality. We can just go ahead and have the relationship with our Higher Power without worrying so much about the things we don’t know or understand. Each time an experience reawakens us, we are more aware of the power nudging us to wake up to our lives.” Living Clean, The Journey Continues, page 76-77.

Thank you for letting me be of service!

Jeannie C.

TRADITION TWO

“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority— a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Tradition Two builds on the practical foundation of Tradition One. We begin with unity, founded on the strength of our commitment to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Our commitment is reflected in service that builds our common welfare: supporting a meeting, sharing with other members, sponsorship, any of the ways in which we reach out to other addicts. As groups, too, our purpose is to serve, to carry the message. Everything we do in service to NA is related to that purpose. Without direction, however, our services might lack consistency. To guide us in serving others, we seek direction from a Higher Power. Personal service arises from the application of principles. Ideally, personal service is founded in a relationship with the same Higher Power that guides our personal recovery. This Higher Power also guides the various elements of our fellowship. Our direction in service comes from a God of our understanding, whether we serve as individuals, as a group, or as a service board or committee. Whenever we come together, we seek the presence and guidance of this loving Higher Power. This direction then guides us through all our actions. Everybody has opinions on how to serve more effectively. When we each propose a different plan for any

course of action, how do we choose among them? Who has the final say in our discussions? Our answer is that a loving God, the source of our unity, has the final say—the same Higher Power that guides our personal recovery. If we are to find guidance from an ultimate authority, we need to find means of hearing that guidance together. The mechanism we Tradition Two 99 use is group conscience. The success of the group conscience process depends on our willingness as individuals to seek guidance from a Higher Power on a personal level. We then bring that willingness into the group setting. Something happens when we practice the steps and learn to apply principles in our individual lives. We develop an awareness of our behavior and its effects on ourselves and others. In other words, we develop a conscience. This conscience is a reflection of our relationship with a Higher Power. It reflects the guidance we receive from the God of our understanding and our commitment to follow that guidance. Whenever we come together in our groups, a similar process may occur: A collective conscience develops. That conscience reflects the relationship of our members to a loving Higher Power. When consulted regularly, that collective conscience guides us in fulfilling our primary purpose while preserving our unity and common welfare. Group conscience can be thought of in much the same way as personal conscience. Group conscience reflects a collective awareness of, understanding of, and surrender to spiritual principles. The conscience of a group takes shape and is revealed when its members take the time to talk with each other about their personal needs, the needs of that group, and the needs of NA as a whole. Each

member draws upon his or her relationship with a Higher Power when sharing with the group. As members listen carefully to each other and consult their personal understanding of a loving God, something happens: Solutions to problems become apparent, solutions that take into consideration the needs of everyone concerned. In developing a group conscience, a clear mutual understanding or consensus arises. Based upon the understanding gained by sharing group conscience, a group may move on to a vote in order to make decisions. In the best of circumstances, however, the group continues discussion until it reaches unanimity. The resulting solution may be so obvious that no vote is needed.

Reprinted from It Works How and Why – pg. 98 & 99.

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.

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