

# The Disease of Addiction

What makes us addicts is the disease of addiction - not the drugs, not our behavior, but our disease. There is something within us that makes us unable to control our use of drugs. This same "something" also makes us prone to obsession and compulsion in other areas of our lives. How can we tell when our disease is active? When we become trapped in obsessive, compulsive, self-centred routines, endless loops that lead nowhere but to physical, mental, and emotional decay.

(Narcotics Anonymous Step Working Guides, pg. 1)

# What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program

Surviving against all odds, we are addicts who meet regularly. We respond to honest sharing and listen to the stories of our members for the message of recovery. We realize that there is hope for us at last.

We make use of the tools that have worked for other recovering addicts who have learned in NA to live without drugs. The Twelve Steps are positive tools that make our recovery possible. Our primary purpose is to stay clean and to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. We are united by our common problem of addiction. By meeting, talking, and helping other addicts, we are able to stay clean. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away.

(Basic Text, pg. 10)

# A Spiritual, Not Religious Program

Each of us has our own spiritual path. As we explore our spirituality we find ourselves on a journey of self-discovery. When we live with spiritual awareness, we find harmony with the God of our understanding, with ourselves, and with others. There is no single recipe for spirituality. Each of us finds our own way to live spiritually, and that allows us freedom to make choices about how we live. It also charges us with responsibility.

We cannot pretend that spirituality is not central to the NA program or the NA way of life. But there is room within that for people of all beliefs - including those with no belief at all. Our right to our own spirituality in NA is unconditional, and that also means we must allow that right to others. It's not very complicated, but this is one area of our recovery that we seem to love to complicate. Any single definition of spiritual principles would be too restrictive for us. Our traditions remind us that NA is not a place where any single spiritual path is endorsed.

(Living Clean, pg. 49)

# Step Eleven

“We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

Although some of us practice a traditional religion, only rarely do we hear specific religious beliefs discussed in our meetings. We respect the rights of our members to form their own spiritual beliefs and tend to frown on anything with a potential to dilute the spiritual message of recovery.

In this encouraging atmosphere, most of us find it relatively easy to discard our preconceived ideas of the “right” way to pray or meditate. Finding our own way is another matter. We may have a basic understanding of what prayer and meditation are, prayer being the times we talk to a Higher Power and meditation the times we listen for a Higher Power’s answers. We may not be aware of the many options that are open to us. Searching those options out and exploring their usefulness to us can be uncomfortable and time-consuming. It is only by being open-minded and by taking action that we are likely to find what is right for us as individuals. We may experiment with a whole assortment of practices until we find something that doesn’t feel foreign or contrived. If we have found that everything feels strange, then we practice a form of prayer and meditation until it no longer seems unnatural. Many of us have adopted an eclectic approach, borrowing our practices from a variety of sources and combining those which provide us the greatest comfort and enlightenment.

(It Works How and Why pg. 108)

# Tradition Three

“The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.”

This tradition is important for both the individual and the group. Desire is the key word; desire is the basis of our recovery. In our stories and in our experience of trying to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers, one painful fact of life has emerged again and again. An addict who does not want to stop using will not stop using. They can be analyzed, counseled, reasoned with, prayed over, threatened, beaten, or locked up, but they will not stop until they want to stop. The only thing we ask of our members is that they have this desire. Without it they are doomed, but with it miracles happen.

(Basic Text, pg. 65)