

EVENTS

"Colours" GLBT meeting of NA (all are welcome) rotating format meeting Saturday 8-9 pm @ 12 step house 205 SW 23rd St in Ft. Lauderdale

"New midnight" meeting needs support 12am-1am on Fri and Sat in the sunrise room of Gold plaza 4525 pine island rd 2nd floor Sunrise

"Prayer to Prayer" rotating format meeting. Every Thursday 7-8pm serenity by the sea 3651 NW powerline rd ft Lauderdale

"Living clean in the dirty south" Fri 8-9 pm new meditation/literature discussion meeting @ royal Palms park. 1701 NW 38th St Oakland park fl 33309

"A New Midnight" presents Midnite Sister Series Fridays @ Midnight in the Sunrise Room of Golds plaza

"Opa locka" group Saturday midnight meeting every Saturday @ midnight at the Opa Locka Clubhouse 1290 Ali Baba Avenue

Too Young To Die has a new meeting on Sundays at 7:30.

Never to Late group of NA is in need of trusted servants

GOLD COAST AREA

YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE OF SERVICE

IF YOU ARE "YOUNG" AND INTERESTED IN DOING SERVICE
PLEASE CONTACT ANTHONY AT 954.892.9993

IT'S A FUN WAY TO GET INVOLVED IN SERVICE

Anniversaries

Sara Lee W- 14 years

Alyce- 5 years

Carl- 2 years

Debbie- 1 year

Ricky- 1 year

Katina – 2 Years

Marc- 2 Years

SISTER STEPS AND TRADITIONS (A1A and Nassua) is celebrating 15 years this month

Is your home group struggling? Are you celebrating an anniversary? Got any good NA news? Want to share your experience strength and hope?

Please contact us by submitting Articles, poems, announcements, etc, at the email provided below.

Submission Information

To submit an article, send it to midcoastnewsletter@gmail.com, Articles can be anything that is recovery related and remember we could edit the article to make it fit into a given space.

We meet the LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, at 6:00 pm at PANERA BREAD® in Delray (right at Linton and Federal)

We are **NOT affiliated with PANERA BREAD®

THE HEART OF NA

OCTOBER 2011 Edition Mid-Coast Newsletter

Meditation

Anonymous

"We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs." This line, often heard at the beginning of our Narcotics Anonymous meetings, is still something that stands out to me. I notice that it does not say "we may have wanted something different," but it says that "we *had* to have something different." Throughout my life and in active addiction, I was confused about what that something different might be. I sought that elusive thing through my own best methods, which didn't work too well. When I began using drugs, I thought I had truly found that thing that I wanted all along.

And what was it that I wanted? I wanted to feel alright, no matter what was going on around me. I desperately wanted peace and poise, to be able to face any situation without fear. I wanted to be happy even if things seemed difficult in life. I thought that I found all of this through being high.

There was a huge problem though. Eventually, the drugs couldn't get me high enough to give me that "something different" I *had* to have. I was more lost than ever. When I arrived at Narcotics Anonymous, I had no direction or sense of purpose in life. Little did I know that this program would provide me with that elusive 'something' I had been searching for all along.

I began to give up my way of living for a new way of living. This meant having people guide me, a sponsor and supports in the fellowship, instead of doing things by myself. These people began to teach me about the 12 steps and how to apply them in my day to day life. By working on the first ten steps with my sponsor, I was able to get a firm foundation in the basis of a spiritual way of living. Much of the wreckage of my past and present was cleared up, and I was able to experience the freedom and peace I had so long been desperately seeking. In the 11th Step, I began to learn about improving my prayers and developing a personal discipline of meditation.

I was blessed to have a sponsor who helped me find a belief that worked for me. Some people see God as the "Great Out-Doors," and spend extra time with nature, whether at the beach listening to waves crash on the shore, watching a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or spending time on a boat on the ocean. Others have a more religious view of God, while still others in the fellowship are atheist. Some people use the word God to stand for "Good Orderly Direction" or "Group Of Druggies." Each person in our program is allowed to find their own concept of God and their own way of 11th step practice that works, and that's a beautiful thing.

In the same fashion, I was free to discover what worked for me with prayer and meditation. In seeking spiritual practices that I could use, I have sought information through various sources, including going to Tibetan Buddhist ceremonies, Christian church services, and NA meetings that included meditation. A particular meeting that was very helpful for me in this regard is located in Hollywood, FL. Called the "Conscious Contact" group, this meeting has a 10 minute silent meditation, followed by a speaker on the 11th step who then is allowed to demonstrate or lead a short meditation after their NA message. I got to experience a wide range of practices at this meeting, and that helped me to have beneficial meditation experiences in my recovery.

I remember thinking, "Hey, I'm praying every day, and I'm meditating at least once a week when I get to that 11th step meeting. That's good enough." When I shared that with my grand-sponsor, he calmly informed me that "if I'm not meditating every day, I'm not practicing the 11th step." This helped me to re-evaluate my practice and work on the discipline necessary for praying and meditating on a daily basis.

As time has gone on, the desire to grow spiritually has continued. I still like to try new things that might help me get an improved conscious contact with the God of my understanding. I found that physical disciplines that help align my body to my inner spirit have been very beneficial for me. Going out to see the beauty of nature has also had a positive effect on me. Narcotics Anonymous has taught me to remain open-minded to new things while also being committed to my own beliefs and practicing devotion to God as I understand Him.

The 11th step, and particularly the meditation aspect, has allowed me to walk through a portal to be of service. When I can put aside my thinking and rely on a Higher Power, everything goes so much better. Those of us who diligently work the 11th step literally carry a message. The message is that we do recover. We find that "something different" we *had* to have as addicts. We stay clean, trust God, clean up our side of the street, and help others. I am so grateful that God brought me to Narcotics Anonymous, because Narcotics Anonymous brought me back to God.

The Heart of NA is a newsletter written and published by addicts for addicts. The opinions, views, experience, etc. contained herein are those of the individual and not those of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole

STEP ARTICLE

"Step 3" by Mat GoldCoast

First off I'll express my personal opinion that no step workshop or article in a newsletter is a reasonable alternative to working the steps with a sponsor. Most of what I will write here is my personal experience with step three along with responses I've gotten from asking my predecessors about it. I would suggest you don't take my word for any of it, take the advice from the beginning of the "what can I do" chapter in the basic text and come to your own understanding of this step and the program of NA by working the steps with an experienced sponsor.

At first glance step 3 seems very self explanatory; "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." Reading the literature and asking my sponsor and more experienced members I came to a few realizations that were very important:

I didn't yet know what my will was. IWH&W has a good description of what self will is on page 26, but how was I going to understand MY will? My sponsor had a very simple answer for that: My will is everything inside of me of a spiritual, emotional, or intellectual nature. It is everything that is me and cannot be touched, smelled, or seen with the eyes. I then knew what that statement meant but was still unaware of what that was.

I had little to no experience with making decisions; previously I allowed my addiction to handle that. During my active addiction I pretty much did what the drugs told me to, whatever was necessary to get more. Drugs where my higher power for most of my life and they had complete control. Now without the drugs to direct my actions I had to find something else to tap into. This requires a pretty big change in that I had to make this decision myself, not the drugs, not my parents, the judge, no one but me could make this decision. Entering new territory here but the hope I picked up in the second step made this possible.

I had no understanding of God to turn my will over to. I had a god as a child that my parents taught me. A cruel punishing god that stopped Santa from delivering presents one year after I pushed my mom in a mall fountain during the winter in IL. A god that sent people to hell if they didn't live their lives exactly as he ordered them to. I knew this wasn't the god I wanted. Thankfully NA has no restrictions on what I could call god. I knew I could feel a presence in NA meetings and activities and decided that would be my "god". Then I was confronted the realization that the only way to turn this step into action at the time was to continue with the steps. In doing so my understanding of this step has changed drastically since then but it wasn't until I was applying the following steps in my life that it happened. Don't take my word for it please, try it. I promise it's worth if if you are willing to put in the effort and apply the principles in your life.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

"My experience in NA" – By: Miguel

I was recently asked to write some of my experience, strength, and hope. I was finished at the H&I (Hospitals and Institutions) Sub-Committee business meeting when I was approached. I must be honest; I was honored. My first question was, "What is the topic"? She said, "You have some clean time, share about that. OH and also it has to be around 700 to 900 words". I thought to myself "WHAT"! I think I remained calm on the outside but inside I was like "Damn... That is a lot of words", just was being real with myself. As I started to walk away, I began to feel proud that I was being asked to write for the NA mid-coast paper.

When I first started my journey in recovery, I would see people sharing at meetings. I would hear people being asked "would you sponsor me?" I would say to myself, why doesn't anyone ask me to do these things? I soon realized that all of these people were involved with the program.

I felt so disconnected, but I was only showing up to meetings. Don't get me wrong; going to meetings is a big part of recovery. I soon found myself raising my hand one week. Then twice a week, I started to become more comfortable with sharing at a meeting. I remember how good it felt to have someone who I didn't really know say "Hey Miguel, How are you?" and then give me a hug. That was awesome. Someone remembered my name. It was only after sharing that this began to happen more and more.

I started to interact with more people. I was now not so afraid. I started to feel that I was a part of something bigger than me. I finally felt like I belonged. I was now opening up to others. I now began to look for a sponsor to work the steps with. That was not easy for me. I found flaws in everyone, but I didn't let that hold me back. So time went by and I found the person u wanted to ask if he would sponsor me. Now all I needed was the courage to ask him. I thought I was a tough guy, but I wasn't, until finally I asked him. He said "I always have room for one more". I was so happy because now I felt that I was ready to start putting my program into action. I will admit I put my sponsor on my fourth step. He was a blessing.

We went through all twelve steps together. Then it was on me to begin to give back what so freely was given to me. This was when I found my calling in recovery. Service work is a major part of my recovery today.

I just want to close with the program of Narcotics Anonymous saves lives. I'm a living testament. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share some experience, strength and hope with all who read this.

TELL US...

HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE IN

MCCNA?

ANY SUGGESTIONS?

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

For The Addict Who Still Suffers

-Anonymous-

"TWELVE PRECEPTS OF SERVICE FOR NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Precept4. Our service is for the addict who still suffers. We believe that the N.A. member is the most important part of our service structure. "The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel." The N.A. group provides an "Atmosphere of Recovery" where the N.A. message is manifest. All the other elements of our service structure have been created to assist, support, and serve our groups and members in the fulfillment of our primary purpose, and are directly responsible to our groups and members. We believe that the "point of delivery" of our service should be as close to the recipient as possible; our service structure (Member-Group- Area-Region-World) was designed to reflect this principle."

This ideal is one that many I believe would still agree with. It highlights the position of the NA group as the place where we carry the message. It separates the service structure from this responsibility and commits to the service structure the responsibility to assist, support and serve our groups and members. No sole member or service body carries our message – NA groups carry the message. The message is far more than the spoken or written word.

The NA groups do need assistance though. The NA groups need committees to let the addict who still suffers in a facility know that there is hope for a new way of life when they get out. That new way of life can be found by going to meetings at NA groups. The NA groups need committees to let the outside world know that there are meetings at NA groups so the addict that still suffers can find them. The NA groups need a forum where they can discuss their difficulties as they arise and hopefully find solutions or support from other NA groups.

All of these do not supersede the first statement. "We believe that the N.A. member is the most important part of our service structure." When we become available to support each other we become a power greater than ourselves. Our self centered obsessions get chipped away when we begin to help and care about others. The precept talks about our point of delivery being as close to the recipient as possible. This helps not only the addict who still suffers. It also helps us overcome our own self centered obsession and ego. Helping one another also goes a long way in helping to carry the message when you consider how self centered we are in our addiction.

Inclosing here is another precept."Precept11. Selfless service is our ideal. The disease of addiction is our greatest strength because it brings us together, it also our greatest weakness because it tends to tear us apart. Our disease is one of obsessiveness and compulsivity; it is physical, mental, and spiritual in nature. We recognize that there is a direct relationship between quality of service and personal recovery. We stress the need for each member involved in service to keep their personal recovery (physical, mental, and spiritual) as their first priority. When individuals get distracted by their disease, fail, or fall short in their service we treat them with compassion and love rather than rejection, exclusion, or punitive action. We strive for progress and do not demand perfection of each other." (All excerpts are taken from Paths of Recovery by Grep P.)

SUB-COMMITTEE OF SERVICE

"This is the NA Helpline..."

Anonymous

From about eight months clean I always wanted to be on the helpline. There was just something about it that really drew me to it. I loved the anonymity of it, and the fact that it is sometimes the first interaction with Narcotics Anonymous addicts have. I was just starting out in service and really starting my recovery when I started to learn about helpline. I went to the subcommittee for the first time when I started going to area to see how NA works. One thing that has always interested me in my recovery is how things work and how NA has spread across the world.

When I first went to helpline, I was told that I would have to wait until I had a year clean before I could start answering phone calls. So I kept coming so by the time I had a year I would be ready and know how to answer every question. One thing I have learned from both helpline and public information is how to answer specific questions because we are not supposed to talk about personal experiences and our opinions. I was all ready to go when I celebrated my year to get on the helpline but it would be a long wait. The helpline chair at the time and I was always in contact and about six months later it was attempt number one. I had the 4-8PM shift on the weekends. On my second weekend, I called the helpline chair and asked if it was weird that I had not gotten a phone call yet. She said it was a little odd, so we tested the helpline and it was not working properly.

With our old system here in Mid-Coast you could not have a phone number that had a different area code than561 and be on the helpline. As Public Information chair, me and helpline chair would attend region every other month. That is where we learned about the One Box system; a system that almost every area was switching to for better pricing and a better service. It would take us about one more year to make the switch official. At just over two years clean I got my first NA Helpline phone call without having to change my phone number. Maybe that is what my higher power intended?

The helpline has been an awesome experience. Talking to people from all over Florida, even if they are not in the Mid-Coast area I will try and help them get to a meeting. The key is to always have a lending ear. Some people are curious about NA, and it is sort of like giving a mini-presentation of what NA is and where we meet. I think working on the helpline and learning a lot about the history of it (they used to have beepers) has been critical in my recovery. Sometimes just listening to the people on the other end of the phone who are struggling to stay clean keeps it real green and it feels good to help them find a meeting. I have also learned a lot about where meetings are even if I have never been to them; it is good just in case I ever want to go to a different meeting. Lastly, I have used the helpline myself when I visited Wisconsin. I called and they got me to a meeting in Milwaukee and the person I was on the phone with was also at the meeting. One of the greatest tools in NA is my phone, and since I have been involved in the helpline subcommittee I know what to do if I need to find a meeting...