

Living Clean

Topic outline

Chapter 1. Why we are still here

Once we've gotten clean, and we've stayed clean a while, why do we stay in NA? In this chapter we try to answer in terms of the Twelfth Step and the Tenth Chapter: we try to practice these principles in all our affairs, and more is revealed to us as we go forward. But the truth is that recovery isn't always an easy process; there are crises and obstacles we all face, at some time or another. For some of us who are the oldest-timers in our areas, recovery can sometimes feel pretty lonely - even when we're in the middle of the fellowship. Finding the spark that makes recovery an ongoing, rewarding and exciting journey requires an active change in our ideas and attitudes – not just once, but again and again.

- Desperation to passion
- Making NA a way of life
- How do we stay
- Why do we stay
- Moving from the disease versus moving toward recovery
- Transitioning out of “being a newcomer”
- Spiral staircase – patterns in recovery not always linear
- Moving from desperation to passion

Chapter 2. who we are

The first time we say, “I am ... and I am an addict,” we begin to change our identity, our understanding of who we are. Our recovery is a constant process of accepting ourselves and changing ourselves, and this chapter seeks to describe some of the ways that we get comfortable with ourselves and the people around us, and begin to let go of what no longer fits. As we allow the principles we practice to become a part of us, we find that we are deeply changed – and truly ourselves.

- Change is Messy
- Reinventing ourselves
- Life Stage Stuff – seeing ourselves as we are becoming
- Self love/self respect
- Breaking patterns, practicing principles
- Isolation
- Alienation
- Other aspects of addiction – symptoms of the disease
- Embracing the positives
- Race ethnicity gender sexuality prejudice
- Using new tools
- Attitudes becoming attributes – internalizing the principles

Here are some other avenues to offering input for this project:

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Chapter 3. What we are – Physical Selves

Learning to live in and with our bodies – not intended to do the same work as the booklet, In Times Of Illness, we hope here to talk about living with our physical selves more broadly – the way we treat ourselves in recovery, learning to find pleasure in being physically alive and aware – and facing our aging, our vulnerability, and our mortality.

- Physical part of recovery
- Risky behavior (not just sexual)
- Sex & sexuality
- Wellness and health
- Mental Health
- Illness
- Aging
- Dying

Chapter 4. who we are in relation to others – Relationships

The BT tells us that we come into recovery as “devious, frightened loners”—and that the ultimate weapon against the disease of addiction is another recovering addict. Our recovery is based in relationships, but most of us struggle with them in one way or another. Our relationships with one another in the rooms, with the families we come from and the families we create, are all places where we learn to practice the principles. Creating healthy relationships with healthy boundaries outside of the rooms is another area where we may look to one another’s experience for guidance.

- Biological family
- NA as “family”
- Romantic and non-romantic relationships
- Employment

Chapter 5. How we are perceived – Acceptable, Responsible and Productive

As we get some time in recovery we get some time in the world, as well. Social acceptability does not equal recovery, to be sure, but that doesn’t mean they’re mutually exclusive, either: for many of us it is something we must learn along the way. Our work habits and our beliefs about work, education, money and stability change and grow as we stick around – sometimes in surprising ways. Learning

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to deal with success and failure, with risk and responsibility, with stability and change are all part of the process some of us call “growing up in recovery.”

- Gaining Social Acceptability
- Institutions
- “Success stuff”
 - Responsible Productive Members of Society
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Disclosure of NA membership to others
 - Seeing ourselves as we are becoming
 - Self love/self esteem
 - Costs of success – challenges
- Failure in recovery –
 - Professional
 - Financial
 - marital

Chapter 6. The Journey Continues

As we continue in recovery the gifts that we receive grow greater – and the difficulties we face deepen, as well. There seem to be some things we share in common along the journey: most of us find ways to serve others, in or out of the fellowship, and in service we are confronted with our own limitations, including the limits of our compassion. We endure the loss of fellow members and sometimes of our loved ones, and learn to live through grief. We also find that the drama that once engaged so much of our time and energy no longer takes up as much room in our lives. Some of us also notice particular patterns at particular moments in our recovery – stages that we go through as we grow.

- Service
- Complacency and how to reenergize ourselves and our recovery
- “The black hole”
- Stages of recovery:
 - Anniversary blues
 - The Change at 5: a new awakening
 - The Change at 10: a new surrender
 - The Change at 20: a new perspective
- Am I well yet?
- Surviving our emotions
- Post convention depression/blues
- Loss
- Adjusting to lack of drama
- When members leave

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Chapter 7. Living Spiritually

As we go forward as members with time, we find that our lives take on a richness and texture that we might never have imagined. More has been revealed to us, more is being revealed every day, if we are open to it, and more will be revealed as long as we continue on the journey of recovery. What is our vision of hope today? How do we move toward that, and what are the obstacles to our spiritual growth?

- What are spiritual principles, and how do I apply them?
- Opening us to all life and the world has to offer
- Priority setting
- Spirituality (mental, physical, spiritual disease)
- Prayer and meditation
- Desperation to Passion
- Service

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This set of questions is presented as a springboard for developing source material for the book. Please feel free to use these questions or to respond to the topics in your own manner.

We are looking for the emotional connection of our members' experience not the clichés we hear at meetings. We are not trying to make a bulleted list. This is a way of gathering additional source material for the book. Rather than try to address the entire outline focus on a chapter and the general topic it is designed to address.

Describe a crucial moment in your recovery related to the topic of the chapter you are focusing on.

What did you learn?

What do you wish someone had shared with you?

What surprised you about the experience?

Keep in mind those moments can occur as a result of great catastrophes or great blessings, during instances of success/failure or as a moment of awareness that shifts our view about our recovery.

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