

## TOTAL ABSTINANCE

Let us admit that medications and drug replacements hold a special hazard for all addicts, not merely those with a history of abuse of these drugs. To the addict, medication or drug replacement represents a means of control, like any other tool of control its use can become compulsive. Keeping in mind that we are not doctors, modern medicine often mistreats addiction with drugs. Drugs, whether self-prescribed or prescribed by a doctor, are a major part of our problem. How can drugs possibly be the solution?

## WE ARE NOT DOCTORS

If we are not doctors then what are we? We are a fellowship of addicts seeking recovery from addiction. When we talk about addiction we are talking about being addicted to drugs. Our recovery program is one of total abstinence from all drugs. "Total Abstinence" is not a medical opinion but a practice of our principles. It is not an outside issue but one that is essential to our recovery. We follow a spiritual, not religious program that provides recovery through the 12 steps and 12 traditions of NA.

## TOTAL ABSTINENCE

The cornerstone of the Narcotics Anonymous program is total abstinence from all mind and mood altering chemicals. Total abstinence is the first thing we hear when we arrive in Narcotics Anonymous. Total abstinence is the beginning, middle and end of our recovery. Our clean time, and our recovery from the disease of addiction begins with that first step. This pamphlet will address some of the spiritual principles we have used in our program to reach total abstinence from all mind and mood altering

chemicals. We understand that there are cases where addicts are hospitalized and given narcotics for things such as major medical emergencies or major accidents. Our Basic Text already gives us the answers to these situations such as "Using local anesthesia, avoiding our drug of choice, stopping drug use while still in the hospital, and spending extra days in the hospital in case withdrawal occurs are some options". This pamphlet is not focused on these issues; this pamphlet is focused on drugs used by some doctors to treat the disease of addiction. So to the newcomer who has been put on any of these type of medications, please keep coming back. Although as addicts we are not responsible for having this disease of addiction, through NA we are given a choice to recover. Once we make this choice we are responsible for our recovery.

## SURRENDER

The process of surrender is a result of living in utter desperation and pain. It is the result of working double overtime to find a solution that does not require giving up drugs completely. It is difficult to accept that drugs are the problem when we have not been able to find peace and serenity by any other means. When we make the decision to surrender, we get relief from the pain of making our own decisions. Surrender is positive for us because we find hope. Once we have surrendered, we open opportunities for other addicts to help us with our problems. We have seen many addicts surrender to this program and detox in the rooms of NA and live productive lives in society. We have also seen many addicts go to other places and detox and come back to NA and celebrate total abstinence in the

rooms of NA. We know any addict can get and stay clean but they must surrender to the program of Narcotics Anonymous for that to happen. Surrender is just the first step to this process, there are many other key spiritual principles you will need along the way such as...

## WILLINGNESS

We surrender to a program of total abstinence when we absolutely can not continue using and there is simply no fight left in us. Now we must become willing to follow some simple suggestions that we hear in meetings. We may not believe that these suggestions are going to help us but we do them anyway because we don't know what else to do. We may think that we don't need a sponsor but we get one anyway because we are afraid not to. We need to become willing to do anything to stay clean.

Willingness is a spiritual principle because it allows us to get a grip on the fact that before change can occur; we have to give our permission. We have to stop holding back inside. We have to relax our personal will with all its preconceptions and preferences so we can look at alternatives. When we want to select something new in our lives, the choice is up to us. Without our willingness, we never get to make the choice and remain tied up in many of our past limitations, illusions and habits.

**‘Willingness to try is the beginning of doing our part. However grand or humble that might be, it is a state of readiness replacing depression and anxiety.’**

Once we become willing to put down the preconceived notion that total abstinence is impossible and surrender to the fact that we are just like everyone else in NA we can then move on to...

## **COMMITMENT**

Commitment is one of the spiritual principles that most people don't connect to the first step. In past editions of the Basic Text it's written "Now the question is: "If we are powerless, how can Narcotics Anonymous help?" We begin by asking for help, and this is accomplished by working and living the twelve steps" where the spiritual principles we have discussed in this pamphlet come from. They are the backbone to a life of complete abstinence; without them we will die. Once we surrender and become willing to do what ever is necessary to become abstinent we need to stay committed to the process in order to not go back to the way of life we once knew. We need to make a commitment to a home group and stay clean no matter what. A commitment to a sponsor is also very important to this new way of life for we can not do this alone!!!

## **OUR SOLUTION**

Our first step says "We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction that our lives had become unmanageable". If we still believe that limited drug use is possible then we have not taken step one, we have not surrendered, and we will use again. Step one is more than an admission of powerlessness, it must be followed by a change of actions. We must stay away from people that are using even if it means we must avoid family members, friends and co-workers. We might have to break free

completely of everything and everyone we know. There is no substitute for surrender. This may be very uncomfortable but we do it anyway because we know in our heart of hearts that is the only way. Based on a life of desperation and a glimmer of hope we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand him. To sum up step three in a nutshell it is simply a decision to take the rest of the steps and to understand that they are the solution to maintaining total abstinence. Faith comes after this way of life becomes a reality. This way of life comes to some very fast and to others very slow but it doesn't come at all if we are still clinging to the idea that we can have it while still using. Remember these 4 things.

**1) The cornerstone of the NA program is total abstinence.**

**2) There is no substitute for surrender.**

**3) Recovery is a complete change of everything we think and do.**

**4) Without commitment to this fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous we will go back to the life we once knew.**

# **Total Abstinence Narcotics Anonymous**



**Literary work in progress.  
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home group for input and review**