

**ALIVE & FREE  
HOME GROUP OF  
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

**LITTLE  
WHITE BOOK**

*Home Group Approved  
Literature*

*Written in Open-Participation by member-addicts Fellowship-wide and  
approved as the official White Book of the Alive & Free Home Group of N.A.*

## PREFACE

This is the White Book as approved for use by the Alive & Free Home Group of Narcotics Anonymous in Pahrump, Nevada.

The “Alive & Free White Book” basically restores to the Revised White Book many truths that were lost as a result of a single board making the revisions, rather than the revisions being made through Open Participation. As an example, “We have no leaders” has been restored, returning the intent of our Second Tradition to the notion that our leaders truly are “but” (only) servants, thus removing the groundwork that was laid for faulty concepts or ego statements such as “Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous”. Another example includes returning the word “Group” in our Traditions to its *original*, capitalized form. This clarifies the fact that Group references our home groups. Again, this removes the change to our NON-NEGOTIABLE Traditions that made possible the removal of “Group conscience” to a service structure that had previously existed as a tool for, rather than a part of “NA, as such”. References to medicine, religion and psychiatry have been returned to their original wording, and important concepts that were removed from “Recovery and Relapse” have been restored as well. The concept of “honest desire” has been similarly restored, though *always* in reference to personal recovery, *never* in reference to membership qualifications or our Third Tradition. We felt this stressed the need for self-honesty as was expressed by many through Open Participation as a concept that was important to them in early recovery, while respecting the input of addicts who believe a desire is a desire and that none among us can judge the desire of another.

Because, as a Fellowship, we are facing new issues and attitudes toward certain drugs, additional clarity statements that are pertinent to attitudes and trends that exist today have been included. There are such issues that were not prominent in earlier days of our Fellowship.

Throughout the process, it was felt that minimal changes to the original literature should be made, while ensuring that NA language was used, minimal tense corrections made, gender equity ensured, and contemporary issues addressed.

Although this booklet was put together and approved by the Alive & Free Home Group, a Fellowship-wide Open Participation process was used, whereby Traditionalist addicts and home groups gave input that had a profound effect on the finished booklet. We have already had reports that several home groups are in the process of making (or have made) it their conscience to use this revision in their meetings and it is freely offered to all addicts seeking recovery and Narcotics Anonymous home groups who wish to use it.

This book is *not* Fellowship Approved in the sense that the entire Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has approved it (but then, nothing that has come out of *any* group or service body in recent decades truly is). This book *is* Fellowship Approved in that it is approved by the Fellowship that makes up our home group and is gaining acceptance by other home groups and localized Fellowships of Narcotics Anonymous.

We are gratified that this booklet is the result of true Open Participation and believe it to be the work of a Loving God, as expressed through our Group Conscience. We feel it is simultaneously an expression of Autonomy and Unity in action, as our Traditions originally intended.

This booklet is Approved Literature of the Alive & Free Home Group as well as any other home groups who choose to use it in readings or make it their own.

In Love & Service,  
THE ALIVE & FREE HOME GROUP  
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

## **WHO IS AN ADDICT?**

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking was centered in drugs in one form or another; the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We lived to use and used to live. Very simply, an addict is a person whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

## **WHAT IS THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM?**

N.A. is a non-profit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only ONE requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A., but we suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that **THEY WORK.**

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no leaders, no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone who has a desire to stop using may join us regardless of age, race, color, creed, sexual identity, political views, philosophy, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. Our group experience shows that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly have a far better chance of recovery. We have learned from that same experience that those who apply the principles found in our Steps **STAY CLEAN.**

## **WHY ARE WE HERE?**

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives. We could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problem. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized, that in our addiction, we were slowly committing suicide, but addiction is such a cunning enemy of life that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people who suffered from a disease from which there is no known "cure". Addiction can, however, can be arrested at some point and "recovery" is then possible.

In N.A. We follow a program of complete abstinence based on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Millions of people have found recovery in this manner who were just as hopelessly lost to addiction as any of us. We are deeply grateful to our predecessors for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

## HOW IT WORKS

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are the principles that made our recovery possible.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. 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.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once. Our disease didn't run its course in one day, so remember— EASY DOES IT.

There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles. Although there are no musts in N.A., there are three things that seem indispensable. These are Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness to try. With these we are well on our way.

We believe that our solution to our common problem is completely realistic, for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict. We believe that the sooner we face

our problems within our society, in everyday living, just that much faster do we become acceptable, responsible, and productive members of that society.

The only way to keep from returning to active addiction is not to take that first drug. If you are like us you know that one is too many and a thousand never enough. We put great emphasis on this, for we know that when we use drugs in any form, or substitute one for another, we release our addiction all over again.

Thinking of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs as different or making distinctions such as “street drugs” or “hard drugs” has caused a great many addicts to relapse. We can easily forget that alcohol is one of the oldest known drugs. We can find ourselves in denial about the fact that marijuana is a very potent mind-changing, mood altering drug. We can find ourselves justifying the abuse of “over-the-counter” medications. We can even be susceptible to a delusional state of thinking in which we believe we are clean while using other drugs as replacements such as methadone, suboxone and the like. Before coming to the Fellowship of N.A., many of us viewed certain drugs separately or made differentiations, but ***we cannot afford to be confused about this***. A drug is a drug! Lasting recovery from the disease of addiction is born of an honest desire to stay clean, and this is only accomplished through complete abstinence from all drugs.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Begin your own program by taking Step One from the previous chapter, "How It Works". When we fully concede to our innermost selves that we are powerless over our addiction, we have taken a big step in our recovery. Many of us have had some reservations at this point, so give yourself a break and be as thorough as possible from the start. Go on to Step Two, and so forth, and as you go on you will come to an understanding of the program for yourself. If you are in an institution of any kind, you may have gone through complete withdrawal and stopped using for the present. Now, with a clear mind, try this way of life.

Upon release, continue your daily program and contact a member of N.A. Do this by mail, by phone, or in person. Better yet, come to our meetings. Here you will find answers to some of the things that may be disturbing you now.

If you are not in an institution, the same holds true. Many of us found an honest desire to stop using outside the walls of jails, hospitals, or other institutions. Stop using for today. Most of us can do for eight or twelve hours what seems impossible for a longer period of time. If the obsession or compulsion becomes too great, put yourself on a five minute basis of not using. Minutes will grow to hours, and hours to days, so you will break the habit and gain some peace of mind. The real miracle happens when you realize that the need for drugs has in some way been lifted from you. You have stopped using and started to live.

## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps, so freedom for the group springs from our Traditions.

As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. 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.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Understanding these Traditions comes slowly over a period of time. We pick up information as we talk to members and visit various Groups. It usually isn't until we get involved with service that someone points out that “personal recovery depends on N.A. unity”, and that unity depends on how well we follow our Traditions. Because we hear about “suggested steps” and

“no musts” so often, some of us make a mistake and assume that this applies to the Traditions the same way it applies to the personal program of the individual. The Twelve Traditions of N.A. are not negotiable. They are the guidelines that keep our fellowship alive and free.

By following these guidelines in our dealings with others and society at large, we avoid many problems. That is not to say our Traditions eliminate them all. We still have to face difficulties as they arise: communication problems, differences of opinion, internal controversies, and troubles with individuals and groups outside the fellowship. However, when we apply these principles, we avoid some of the pitfalls.

Many of our problems are like those our predecessors had to face. Their hard-won experience gave birth to the Traditions, and our own experience has shown that these principles are just as valid today as they were when these Traditions were formulated. Our Traditions protect us from the internal and external forces which could destroy us. They are truly the ties that bind us together. It is only through understanding and application that they work.

## RECOVERY & RELAPSE

Many consider continuous abstinence and recovery as noteworthy and therefore synonymous, while relapsers are sort of pushed aside, or worse yet, used as statistics that in no way give a true picture of the entire disease pattern and recovery process. We in the recovery program of Narcotics Anonymous have noted with some satisfaction that many of the relapsers when again active in addiction have dropped many of the parallel behaviors that characterized them in the past. This change alone is significant to us. Honesty of a kind has penetrated their character. Yet there are others, completely abstinent, whose dishonesties and self-deceits still prevent them from enjoying complete recovery and acceptance within society. Continuous abstinence, however, is still the best ground for growth. In close association and identification with others in N.A. Groups, our chances for recovery and complete freedom in a changing and creative form are enhanced a hundred fold.

Although all addicts are basically the same in kind, we do, as individuals, differ in degree of sickness and rate of recovery. There may be times when a relapse lays the groundwork for complete freedom. At other times only by a grim and obstinate willfulness to hang on to abstinence come hell or high water until a crisis passes, can that freedom be achieved. An addict, who by any means, can lose even for a time the need or desire to use, and has free choice over impulsive thinking and compulsive action, has reached a turning point that may be the decisive factor in his or her recovery. The feeling of true independence and freedom hangs here at times in the balance. To step out alone and run our own lives again draws us, yet we seem to know that what we have has come from a Power greater than ourselves and the giving and receiving of help from others in acts of empathy. Many times in our recovery the old bugaboos will haunt us. Life may again become meaningless, monotonous and boring. We may tire mentally in repeating our new ideas and tire physically in our new activities, yet we know that if we fail to repeat them we will surely take up our old practices. We suspect that if we do not use what we have, we will lose what we have. These times are often the periods of our greatest growth. Our minds and bodies seem tired of it all, yet the dynamic forces of change or true conversion, deep within, may be working to give us the answers that alter our inner motivations and change our lives.

Quality and not quantity are the most important aspects of abstinence. Emotional recovery and the spiritual awakening brought about by our Twelve Steps are in reality our goals, not mere physical abstinence. To improve ourselves takes effort and since there is no way in the world to graft a new idea on a closed mind, an opening must be made somehow. Since we can do this only for ourselves, we need to recognize two of our seemingly inherent enemies, apathy and procrastination. Our resistance to change seems built in and only a nuclear blast of some type will bring about any alteration or initiate another course of action. Should we survive it, a relapse may provide the charge for the demolition process. A relapse and sometimes subsequent death of someone close to us can do the job of awakening us to the necessity for vigorous personal action.

## WE DO RECOVER

Although “Politics makes strange bedfellows”, as the old saying goes, addiction makes us one of a kind. Our personal stories may vary in individual pattern but in the end we all have the same thing in common. This common illness or disorder is addiction. We know well the two things that make up true addiction: obsession and compulsion.

Obsession—that fixed idea that takes us back time and time again to our particular drug or some substitute, to recapture the ease and comfort we once knew.

Compulsion—that once having started the process with that first drug we cannot stop through our own power of will. Because of our physical sensitivity to drugs, we are completely in the grip of a destructive power greater than ourselves.

When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends—jails, institutions, or death; or find a new way to live. In years gone by, very few addicts ever had this last choice. Those who are addicted today are more fortunate. For the first time in man's entire history, a simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. It is available to us all. This is a simple spiritual—not religious—program, known as Narcotics Anonymous.

When my addiction brought me to the point of complete powerlessness, uselessness and surrender [in 1950], there was no N.A. I found A.A., and in that Fellowship met addicts who had also found that program to be the answer to their problem. However, we knew that many were still going down the road of disillusion, degradation and death, because they were unable to identify with the alcoholic in A.A. Their identification was at the level of apparent symptoms and not at the deeper level of emotions or feelings, where empathy becomes a healing therapy for all addicted people. With several other addicts and some members of A.A. who had great faith in us and the program, we formed, in July of 1953, what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous. We felt that now the addict would find from the start as much identification as each needed to convince themselves that they could stay clean, by the example of others who had recovered for many years.

That this was what was principally needed has proved itself in these passing years. That wordless language of recognition, belief and faith, which we call empathy, created the atmosphere in which we could feel time, touch reality and recognize spiritual values long lost to many of us. In our program of recovery we are growing in numbers and in strength. Never before have so many clean addicts, of their own choice and in free society, been able to meet where they please, to maintain their recovery in complete creative freedom.

Even addicts said it could not be done the way we had it planned. We believed in openly scheduled meetings; no more hiding as other groups had tried. We believed this differed from all other methods tried before by those who advocated long withdrawal from society. We felt that the sooner the addict could face his problem in everyday living just that much faster

would he become a real productive citizen. We eventually have to stand on our own feet and face life on its own terms, so why not from the start. Because of this, of course, many relapsed and many were lost completely. However, many stayed and some came back after their setback. The brighter part is the fact that of those who are now our members, many have long terms of complete abstinence and are better able to help the newcomer. Their attitude, based on the spiritual values of our Steps and Traditions, is the dynamic force that is bringing increase and unity to our program. Now we know that the time has come when that tired old lie, "Once an addict, always an addict", will no longer be tolerated by either society or the addict seeking recovery. We do recover.

**JUST FOR TODAY**  
***LIVING THE PROGRAM***

Tell yourself:

JUST FOR TODAY my thoughts will be on my recovery, living and enjoying life without the use of drugs.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have faith in someone in N.A. who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have a program. I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.

JUST FOR TODAY through N.A. I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

JUST FOR TODAY I will be unafraid, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear.

## **SERENITY PRAYER**

God,

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.