
PLUGGED IN

A Newsletter for the Suncoast Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Welcome!

Welcome to this new edition of Plugged In! We are your new editorial team. We are following a theme for the next twelve months — the 12 steps. We invite you to consider the coming month's theme when you make your submissions. Our new "Ask a Sponsor" column fits this step-work theme particularly well — ask away!

Grab us at meetings or email us and tell us what you think, what ideas you may have, and if something we published was meaningful and useful to you. We want to tell stories, hear poetry, encourage one another in our recovery, and give each other insight into how to work a more meaningful program.

Talk to us!

-Ethan C. and Cole Y.

Our Members Share

Anonymity: the condition of being anonymous or lack of outstanding, individual, or unusual features; impersonality. It's also the 11th tradition of the recovery program of NA. This tradition is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in the program. Within it, each member becomes an active guardian of the fellowship. We of NA believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It's a reminder that we are to place principles before personalities; that we're actually supposed to practice genuine humility. This to say that our beautiful blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever be grateful and live in thanks for our gratitude towards our higher power.

However, this is not to be confused with an addict's personal recovery, as that should be expressed within the rooms of NA by them, and them only. For example, if someone is asked, "does Brittany go to NA?" The correct response to that, if you're not Brittany, should be, "I don't know — ask her." It's no one else's business except your own if you wish to share about being an addict and whether you're in the program. It's very important to keep the

anonymity sacred within the program so that it doesn't possibly send another member back out. This is not a guarantee, however that's an example of one of the more severe consequences of not having anonymity. This is unfortunate and this disregard for anonymity can further the stigma in association with addiction, and thus make it more difficult for people and families still suffering to find the help that they desperately need.

In addition to the spiritual principle of anonymity within the fellowship is dealing with the principle of humility. The purpose of anonymity is so that no one member of NA may feel the need through personal ego to go out to the world and shout through the media about how well they're doing and that everyone needs to recognize how great NA is and how much good it does for people. The principle of anonymity is designed so that the addict offers their ego to the fellowship, saying that "you're part of the whole," so that not one person or persons can affect the program as a whole. This demonstrates that the program was doing fine before any particular person got there and the program doesn't need to be spoken for by any one person.

-Brittany G.

Ask A Sponsor

*Tired of your sponsor always being right? Want a second opinion? Each month we will be interviewing an area sponsor. This month's subject is **Danielle T.***

How many sponsees do you think is a good amount, and how do you gauge that?

-Laura

This is a very personal decision. First, I would suggest talking to your own sponsor about it. Second, I ask myself do I think I can give the person what they are needing? (and sometimes I need an outside perspective on that) Are my sponsees working steps? Because hopefully they are. Can I provide them with the time they may need? If my plate seems full to me, it may be an injustice to say yes if I can't give them the attention they deserve. In that case, I may consider pointing them in the direction that can better suit their needs. Last but not least, how much time am I spending on my own recovery? Am I taking on more than I can safely handle?

What's a good homework assignment for working on relationships?

-Smith

In my experience, to be open and honest is the best policy. If something is upsetting me about my partner, I will try to take some time to reflect, or to talk it out (with my trusted few). When I feel as though I can approach my partner from a loving and caring space, I will do so. Do I always do this perfectly? No! But just like recovery: progress not perfection. Recovery taught me how to communicate from an open and honest place, not a damning, damaging place.

What do you do when your significant other relapses?

-Kerin S

I can only come from the perspective of the "relapser," and even with that, I am in a relationship with a "normie." There were many times, many days and nights, that my partner became obsessed with how I was doing. I can clearly see that is no way to live. When the obsession of someone else becomes stronger than the well being of ourselves, I believe we are in grave danger. Now saying that, I believe in chances, and I was given many, but when our recovery becomes compromised, it is something that needs to be addressed. How many chances do we give? I don't know, but through our support group, our sponsors (and outside help if needed), eventually our higher power will reveal to us the answers we are seeking.

What's been your biggest obstacle in recovery?

-Monica

Learning who I am, and getting comfortable in my own skin. This has taken inner work through the twelve steps, and working closely with my sponsor to develop a healthy relationship with myself. The time spent has been priceless, and god willing I will stay open-minded enough to continue to grow in ways I can't even see yet. In my experience, the time spent writing on my steps has been the greatest moments in my recovery. I can promise that for this addict, they have changed how I view myself and, in return, the world around me. The spiritual awakenings have brought highs that no drug could ever have given me. Through NA and through the steps, today I am comfortable in my own skin. God's grace is amazing.

Ask a Sponsor is a recurring feature. Next month's guest is **Dan T**. Please submit your questions to newsletter@suncoastna.org.

Tomorrow I will have to be there

This was written three days before I attempted suicide during my active addiction. I stumbled upon it the other day looking for a notepad to write stepwork in and I saw recovery in it, even though I had no idea what that meant at the time. This program has given me so much. Today I am a little over a year clean and truly happy. Reading this today I see a message of hope sent from a desperate person at her absolute bottom. I no longer live there thanks to NA.

Tomorrow I will have to be there. Out of the deepest despair can come the clearest thought. What comes of it? This moment is the only guarantee, tomorrow is only hope. These thoughts will carry me through today, but tomorrow I will have to be there. I am not all that I can be, but can I be? We find these safe havens in others, and I wholeheartedly believe these connections to be necessary, but they can't be it. I look for me in others so why can't I face the mirror? I step outside of my own mind and I see it: I see me. I rectify the faults with the successes of the pieces that make this person I live with everyday. Am I good? Am I good enough to be loved? Am I good enough to be loved by someone? Am I good enough to be loved by someone who is also good? Do I need this at all? If I adapt to a life where the only love I require is the one that I have for myself, will this be good enough? Connections to others has always fed so much of...

Celebrate!

Nancy C. 7/11/17 1 year

Laura 2 years

Rachel B. 7/9/11 7 years

Reggie H. 9/9/12 6 years

Neil. 7/26/14 4 years

Cait C. 7/5/17 1 year

Brian S. 7/26/02 16 years

David M. 8/10/87 31 years

Jim L. 8/23/14 4 years

Bob G. 9/30/08 10 years

Alice T. 8/4/17 1 year

Craig L. 8/18/84 34 years

Ashley J. 7/23/17 1 year

Benny 29 years

Patty M. 7/25/17 1 year

Mark T. 7/28/98 20 years

Diane S. 6/8/94 24 years

Jimmy F. 18 months

Monica R. 7/9/17 1 year

Lori M. 8/1/86 32 years

Dodie L. 8/19/98 20 years

Mary T. 8/5/13 5 years

Submissions:

Submissions are welcomed. Please share your recovery in the form of essays, poetry, or artwork by emailing newletter@suncoastna.org.

Next month's theme will be the Fourth Step. So while all submissions are welcome, submissions focusing on Faith and personal experience with the Fourth Step will be particularly helpful.

...this flesh, blood, bones, and neurons making these celebrations. My emotional brain deserves a day. This is your day; I give you one, but tomorrow I will have to be there.

- Jessica B

Announcements

New meeting being formed! A new meeting is being formed on Monday nights from 6:30 - 7:30 at Parrish United Methodist. They are looking for home group members and group name suggestions.

Dance Party! Brought to you by 5 O' Clock Clean. Alena House, 1360 Whitfield Ave. Saturday August 25, 2018. From 8:00 - late. Come join 5 O' Clock Clean for fun, food and fellowship. \$5 suggested donation or \$10 for a plate of food. No addict turned away.

New meetings:

Name: Lost and found

When: Mondays 7:00 - 8:00 PM

Format: Open discussions, open meeting;

Where: Harvest House, 2100 Mango Ave, Sarasota FL.

Name: 5 O'Clock Clean

When: 5:00 PM on Saturdays

Where: 1360 Whitfield Ave. (Upstairs)