The Clean Times

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**Cover story**

**By:**

**Brittany J.**

**New Beginnings 2**

Hey family. My name is Brittany and I am an addict.  I want to concentrate on my life since coming to NA but I want to “qualify” myself. Who wants to read something without a little dirt, right? Here are a few outside things that make it apparent that I belong here; I am a convicted felon, an IV user, on MS Drug Court, used while I was pregnant, lost custody of my son when I went to jail and have been to treatment a couple times. Internally, I have been obsessing over writing this for about a month now. Once I was told it wasn’t due until the end of February, I completely put it off. I’ve been thinking I’m really special and that hundreds of people are going to read this and it’s going to change their lives forever and everyone will love me, so on and so forth. Yes, I still think like this so just imagine my mental state if I was still using.

“We teach by example. Even when we are teaching what not to do, we are still carrying

a message…..Our hope is that the next member will do better than we did, that they can learn from our mistakes.” –Living Clean p 7

I’ve been consistently around the rooms of NA for four years now; however, I do not have that amount of time clean. A lot of great things have happened since being around the program. I say being around the program and not in because about half the time, that’s all I’ve been, is around.  I’ve had three sponsors and never got to Step 2 outside of treatment. I’ve done a lot of service work, however, the majority of it has been things I enjoy doing, planning anniversaries, game nights, etc. I love the literature and still I don’t read it as much as I should. The same thing goes for praying and meditating.  I don’t obsess about using, there are just fleeting thoughts every once in awhile. I have so many blessings with outside things that seem to come with just being clean. I have my son, live in a safe environment, and have a job, and a car and all this material stuff. The mental, physical and emotional aspects of myself are still in disarray. In my case, the drugs weren’t really the problem. I took them away and yes things got better but I still practice addict behaviors.  I still don’t truly love myself. I can’t help but to think what if…what if I did what has been suggested of me…what if I worked all the steps…what if I tried to follow God’s will…what if I applied spiritual principles in all areas of my life?

**Step 10**

**By:**

**Debbie S.**

**Thursday Nighters**

In my crazy days I never saw where I had a part in anything, as silly as that sounds.  I didn’t have the desire to even look because I would’ve had to change and there was no willingness, I hadn’t been beaten enough by my disease.  I stayed in the “blaming” mode, it was their fault”.   That was how my life went on a daily basis.

Once I got real with self and got a sponsor and started working my program, it was suggested to me to get the IP  “Living the Program” and sit down at night and read each question and answer it, this allowed me to form the habit of looking at myself and my actions, rights, wrongs and harm.  This step allows me to stay out of the insanity I can cause in my own head by staying in the “today” and sincerely looking at my part in any situation.

I had to learn to see my faults, not to justify them.  Sometimes I immediately know when I cause the harm by listening to my gut, which is the God of my understanding, telling me “hey….’!!  There are times when it is hard for me to admit it immediately and it will take a couple of days before I can get out of myself and be honest and go to the person, work, or wherever I caused the harm, and admit I was wrong and what can I do to make it right.

This step is cleansing for me.  It allows me to stay in the here and now and not have to carry all that anger and grief with me.  Times it is embarrassing to have to admit the harm I caused and to clean it up, yet at the same time it saves me from carrying around the anger, resentment, and all the negative feelings I maybe having.

There are times the person may not accept my amends or admission and that is OK.  They don’t have to forgive me.  This is about cleaning up my side of the street and working on changing that behavior, not to say that I get “well” but I’m definitely more aware of my behavior and will work on it always.

**Tradition Ten**

**By:**

**Brooks B**

**Step Write In**

 Tradition Ten says NA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy. That sounds pretty simple.  Clarity and simplicity are the keys to our message right? Our literature says there two ways we find ourselves in public controversy: One, by taking a stand on our own opinion; two, by being drawn into it by others. There are many issues that help NA members stay clean but are controversial when it comes to public policy or social acceptance, total abstinence, drug replacement programs, personal anonymity, the disease concept of addiction, even our broad views of spirituality. We know NA works; thousands of recovering addicts all over the world prove it. There is really no need to take it personally; causing controversy inside or outside the rooms never helps. Our message speaks for itself. I believe NA is for all those who want it, not all those who need it. Our literature says unity, anonymity, and our primary purpose are ours alone. NA has only one message “An addict, any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.”  NA has no opinion on outside issues. As members of NA we each have a right to our own opinion. Tradition Ten makes it clear that meetings are not the place to discuss some of our opinions. With clean time we develop morals, values, and beliefs to live by. Through the evaluation and reevaluation found in working the steps those things can change. We must make sure those things are not mistaken for the principles of NA. If we hear messages through other fellowships or institutions that we feel would be helpful in a NA meeting we must remember that our purpose is to share our experience, strength, and hope through the program of NA. Our literature says if we are having a problem that affects our ability to stay clean and grow spiritually it is not an outside issue, getting experience from other recovering addicts and a sponsor is a way to find out how to share about these things. Tradition ten says, as a fellowship we agree to take positions only on those ideas that have drawn us together.

**Concept 10**

**By:**

**Dave K.**

**Something Different**

Concept 10 states that “Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance, without fear of reprisal.”  In our fellowship, the individual addict is valued and respected, and encouraged to speak their mind in Concept 9, and protected against any wrongful reaction for doing so in the 10th Concept.  This 10th concept gives any addict the right to appeal decisions and ask for amends for any wrongs that may have been committed.

Before petitioning a service body for redress of a grievance, an addict should consider talking to his or her sponsor, working a mini 4rth step which includes his or her part in the situation, and praying for guidance and courage.  This illustrates the importance that addicts work and live the steps and traditions, before moving on to the concepts. Otherwise, an addict would not have experience working the steps, which are necessary for this concept, in particular steps 4 and 11.

One can appeal to a subcommittee, or appeal to the overseers of that group, which for a subcommittee would be Area.  The addict can write a letter, or use open forum to bring up a request that a decision be revisited, or that a wrong be redressed.

There is an example of this concept, in the literature.  In the example an addict is slandered, which results in a vote against him holding a position.  Upon learning of the slander, the addict talks to his sponsor, does a mini 4rth step which includes his part in the situation, and prays for guidance and courage from a higher power.  Then the addict with guidance from his sponsor makes a decision to petition for redress.

An addict can go directly to a service group to ask for a redress, or go to the overseer of that service group.  For example, an addict can go to a subcommittee, or to the overseer, which would be Area. In one of the examples in the literature, the addict goes directly to the subcommittee, and in the other example the addict goes to area, because the subcommittee chairperson was not cooperating.

This concept is an illustration of a group doing an 8th and 9th step.  The same way that an individual makes amends, groups should consider making amends when it is requested they do so.  We discussed how this concept in no way guarantees amends will be made, all it does is guarantee the right to request and be granted a redress and consideration of an issue.

This concept like all the concepts contains spiritual principles.  In particular, there is the principle of patience. The addict practices patience, first talks to a sponsor, prays, and does an inventory, before going to a service board.  The addict may also need a lot of courage, which is a spiritual principle, to ask that a wrong be redressed. Praying for courage is a part of step 11.

**Enemy of the state**

**By:**

**Bill B.**

**Keep it Green**

About 15 years of active addiction I finally got arrested & charged for manufacturing meth... A 250,000 dollar fine meaning no one was going to bond me out. It was the first time I had a criminal charge & I honestly believed my life was over...

The moment I was asked if I would take drug court, it sounded really good until I got back to my pod. Everyone told me it was a trap & Drug Court was set up for clients to fail.

I’m here to tell you the truth... Drug Court is set up for you to fail....if you don't want help... Why? Because of one reason....our chances of overdosing and dying in jail are slim to none... Not only did I learn the importance of one recovering addict helping another, but I learned it was impossible to fool a recovering addict. For a while I honestly believed someone was snitching on me. Little did I know, it was myself. My body language, tone of voice, & attitude said it all.

During my eighteen months I've witnessed seeing people reclaim their life only to relapse & die after graduation. Death of this disease was difficult for me to accept, but it’s a truth that saved my life.

The moment my eyes were opened I was able to receive everything Drug Court had to offer...  It taught me the importance of spiritual maintenance found in the twelve steps, a higher power, and a sponsor... I learned the importance of watching what goes in my body. Drug court paid for my doctor, my dental, counseling, and held me accountable. The importance of accountability is the foundation of Drug Court that many take for granted... I learned the importance of a support group and I learned the disease of addiction is against these things... I was encouraged to stay single my first year clean, and I believe I would have relapse if I hadn't. Keeping focused single is hard, but in a relationship I can see it's next to impossible.  By graduating Drug Court my charges were dropped and soon to be whipped off my record... Instead of prison I received treatment. Not only am I clean today but I have a clean record. The ENEMY OF the STATE of my mind is my disease that I continue to keep arrested each day.

**Life on Life’s Terms**

**By:**

**Tayler O.**

**Hope Dealers**

My name is Tayler and I’m a grateful recovering addict. When David reached out to me and gave me the topic Life on Life’s terms…I thought to myself this is extremely fitting for me. Over the past seven years being in recovery, I have definitely had my share of ups and downs. Accepting life on life’s terms is easier said than done, especially when it feels like everything around you is crashing down. I think there is this misconception that once you get clean everything is just magically okay. Putting down the drugs is one thing but trying to change everything in your life can be a whole other task. Always makes me think of this line from the 12 steps of NA “this sounds like a big order and we can’t do it all at once, we didn’t become addicted in one day so easy does it.” Being able to deal with life on life’s terms is only possible if I am able to accept it and turn it over to God. This isn’t a onetime turn over deal for me. I can be extremely hard headed and easily take back my will. So, there might be several times throughout the day that I have to keep turning over my dilemma over and over…and over again. I’m always reminded that no matter what I think, I don’t have everything under my control. Life is never going to be perfect. I am going to have good days and bad days. Ultimately, it’s how I choose to deal with my bad days that really counts. Narcotics Anonymous has taught me that when things aren’t going my way, instead of using things outside of myself to change the way I feel, I can take things as they come and work through my problems with the help of other recovering addicts. I cannot ask for help if I do not accept that I don’t have all the answers. I try to the best of my ability to remain teachable so that I can gain a new perspective. It is quite obvious that being self-reliant only caused me pain and misery thus landing me in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous in the first place. I am forever grateful for all the women before me who helped pave the way of recovery and showed me how to live clean just for today. Today through God’s help and other addicts in the program, I am ready to accept life on life’s terms…tomorrow that may be a different story.

**Ice Queen Methamphetamine**

You don't want to play anymore, that's such shame

You knew from the start this wasn't a game

You paid a very high price to stay loyal to me

I said your life was mine and you'd never be free

You cry to me now? You poor little fool

You played in my kingdom. Lived under my rule.

Your life's a huge mess and you dare to blame me?

Lot's take a look back and see what we see

You call me a liar when I never lied

I told you our first date that I'd make you cry

Now that you've got one foot in the grave

Didn't I tell you I'd make you my slave?

I warned you if you didn't leave me alone

You'd lose all that you love and all that you own

When in your arms I said I'd drive you insane

Now you have the nerve to say I caused your pain?

I said I play for keeps and I never play nice

It's not my fault you chose to ignore my advice

I gave you a peek of how life would be

If you were foolish enough to start messing with me

Kindly recall it was on our next date

You thought it was love, I said it'd be hate

I never forced you to come back for more

I even told you I'd make you my whore

I didn't say you'd have a glamorous life

I tried to tell it'd be all pain and strife

You lost every penny though you'd been told

To play in my kingdom is more expensive than gold

You'll get no sympathy from me you stupid poor fool

You tried to deny what I told you was true

So drown in your tears next time I'm in your arm

And never again blame me for your harm

Cause none of your power, your might or your wealth

can buy back the fact that you did this all to yourself

**Miss Heroin**

So now Little Man you've grown tired of grass, LSD, Acid, Cocaine, and Hash

And someone pretending to be a trie friend Said, "I'll introduce you to Miss Heroin."

Well honey, before you start fooling with me, Just let me inform you of how it will be.

for I will seduce you and make you my slave. I've sent men much stronger  than you to their graves

You think you could never become a disgrace and end up addicted to poppy seed waste.

So you'll start inhaling me one afternoon; you'll take me into your arms very soon.

And one I have entered deep down in your veins, the craving will nearly drive you insane.

You'll need lots of money(as you've been told) for darling, I cost more than gold.

You'll swindle your mother and, just for a buck, you'll turn into something vile and corrupt.

You'll mug and you'll steal for my narcotic charm, and feel contentment when I'm in your arms.

The day when you realize the monster you've grown, you'll solemnly promise to leave me alone.'If you think that you've got the mystical knack, then sweetie, just try getting me off your back.

The vomit, the cramp, your gut tied in a knot, the jangling nerves screaming for jut one more shot.

the hot chills, the cold sweat, the withdrawal pains, can only be saved by little white grains.

There's no other way. and there's no need to look; for deep down inside, you will know you are hooked.

You'll desperately run to the pusher and then, you'll welcome me back to your arms once again.

And when you return (just as I foretold) I know that you'll give me your body and soul.

You'll give up your morals, your conscience, your heart and you will be mine until DEATH DO US PART!

**Announcements:**

**April:**

22nd Thomas R 3 yrs. and Jeff L 5 yrs. @ Primary Purpose

**May:**

4th-6th NA in May @ Shelby Forrest

9th Steve A 17 yrs. @ TBA

11th Sara S 3 yrs. @ Spiritual Awakenings

20th Cortez J. 22 yrs. @ Primary Purpose

**June:**

4th Ben B and Geoff B 1 yr @ High on Life

**Editors Note:**

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