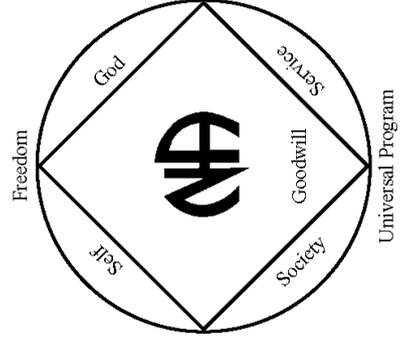


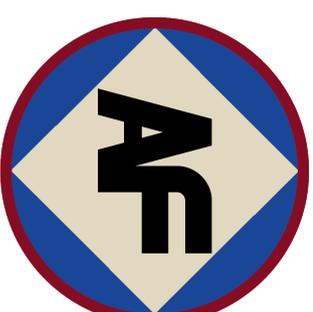
One Addict's Experience With



**GROUP CONSCIENCE
THROUGH THE STEPS**



WWW.NAHELP.ORG



“God, take my will and my life,
guide me in my recovery,
show me how to live.”

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Literary Work in progress. Please copy and share this
with your local Home Group for Review and Input
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A.S.I.S for NA, The Anonymi Foundation.

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before I worked the steps and the difference of doing service as a direct result of having had a spiritual awakening as a result of working the steps. Thank God for allowing me to be of service today.

“God, as we endeavor to complete this work, we know that you are with us. We know that without your strength and inspiration we are not capable of the task before us. We know that this work is not our work, but yours. Each of us, in our own way, humbly petition You and use us as your tools, according to Your will. We offer ourselves to you in this way knowing that You are Loving God and have all the power. In this work and in our lives—Thy will be done.”

{Gray Book Narcotics Anonymous Pre-Publication draft of our Basic text}

This is my experience from years of being involved in a home group since 1979 and be part developing a group conscience without ego being involved. I have learned how to work the steps and put the common welfare of NA first in all are decision making process. It took years of learning how to develop a relationship with God though the steps first surrendering to the 1st step of NA realizing that I had no power over addiction and that I needed help. Through Identify with others that I had a problem and listening to the group identification of being addicts and there powerlessness over the disease of addiction I became able to except the 1st step into my life and become part of NA.

Through the second step I practiced surrendering that there was something greater than myself {Ourselves} as it states in the step. I needed something that could help me with being powerless, useless and helplessness over the disease of addiction. How could I experience group conscience when I didn't experience and Identify that I needed something greater than myself to restore me to sanity, this is the question I ask myself. So I ask the group how they came to believe in a greater power than themselves. They told me it did not happen over night except to look at were my own power had taken me two. They ask me to be open minded in this search and to remember that this power had to be loving and caring power. Through this guidance I became willing to believe that whatever was keeping the group clean that this would be the Greater Power that I would seek and that power became G.O.D. {good orderly direction} is what worked for me. How many times do we seek good orderly direction before we make decision, or do we rely on are own thinking process without getting direction from those in the group that have came before us? Do we read and study the traditions of NA? Do we talk to our sponsor before making decision about our lives and direction we are headed in our recovery? Now that I have come to believe in this Greater Power and surrendered my life to seeking direction first before making decision I was able to see the need to build a relationship through the 3rd step with God.

How could I be part of Group Conscience when I did not know how to invite God into my life? How could I seek the direction of God to make sure that it was Gods Will and not mine being made? I had to learn to turn my will and life over to the care of God first before I could see what was best for the group let alone my own life. When an important issue comes up before the group could I put my own personality aside on an issue? Did I have a need to be heard? Was my thought process more

important than the next addicts? Did I rely on God Will, did I pray first and invite God into my decision making process? Was I willing to wait for an answer before I voted on important issue? How did I know that God had spoken in our decision? Did I collect all information before making a decision? Did I pray for Gods direction first and turn everything over to the care of God? The third step helps me with an understanding that I needed to do a 4th step in my life before I could know myself, let alone what was best for the group. A fear based decision is a reflection of the past. Have you ever heard we need to take action, addicts are going to die?

This brings the worst out in us, were fear takes control of are emotions and than we react from fear, thinking we are doing what is best for the fellowship.

Without doing a 4th step I kept reacting from fear that controlled my life in the past. I can remember when a issue came up before the home group to take nar-anon off our meeting list and phone line, how the home group got caught up in the emotional side of the issue and could not look at the traditions for are answers let alone ask God for help within our conscience. The members took sides on the issue and fear alone controlled the issue. What was going to happen to nar-anon they needed are help and addicts were going to die if we did not help those who cared about the addicts? This issue alone bought anger out from the membership who did not get what they wanted when the vote was unanimous to remove nar-anon from the phone line and the meeting list. Members left the group through this issue for not going there way. However the vote was not to remove them it was to uphold the traditions of NA and they all agreed that nar-anon would be removed because it was a violation of the traditions to affiliate our selves with them. Two different issue were bought up the emotions we could debate are emotions and how we felt. The second was looking at the principles that are in the traditions that were not debatable which could set us free from the emotional side of the issue. Knowing ourselves and how we react to certain patterns in our lives could help in this area of not reacting through fear, control and anger. Through doing a searching and fearless moral inventory of my self helps me in the area of understanding myself and my reacting to others when the present their self to group conscience. Did you ever hear that someone is having a control issue when they would not let an issue die or come to the table in group conscience? How did we react to this? What part did we play in the argument over an issue? Where

out his will in all areas of our lives. We have developed an attitude of being a living prayer through those steps.

After having had a spiritual waking as a result of those steps we tried to carry the message to addicts. How do we carry the message to addicts? I had to ask my self that question I talked it over with my sponsor and my home group I belong to. I was told the best way was to participate in the home group that I was a member of. I had to share that message that I had been living as a direct result of the steps and the life that they had been given to me. I had found freedom from active addiction and that I did not have to use that day, I was no longer enslaved to the disease; I had found freedom in the rooms of NA. What more did I need to do? I had to become available to give of my time to help the suffering addict who wanted help. I had to continue to participate practicing the principles of the steps in my life; however the principles I came to understand that we needed to practice in our daily affairs were I needed to involve myself in the learning of the twelve traditions through the process of belonging to a home group. The group was the best place for a recovering addict to participate in the carrying of the message of NA. I heard of 12 step work so often and that you do not do a twelve step call by yourself that you needed another addict to with you when you participated in twelve step calls. That is were the tradition came into play because the tradition gave us principles that needed to be carried out when involved in service. As a result of becoming God centered I needed to become involved in his greater purpose of making recovery more available and where would a better place than the home group and the service it provided. It talked about becoming involved in Group conscience, how I could become involved in group conscience if I had not worked the steps and developed a relationship with God of our understanding? I had to practice all the principles I had learned from the steps and also have to learn the principles of the tradition to carry out our message. How do we communicate through the group if we haven't lived the steps? We had to have developed our own conscience so we can participate in a Group conscience. Group conscience demands that we put our ego aside for the betterment of the group. We have to become selfless to be of service to help the suffering addict who wants help. How do we participate in service if we are not selfless? Do we do service as a direct result of living the steps? Have you had a spiritual awakening first before you have done service? I have asked myself these questions and all service that I am involved in is a direct result of living the twelve steps of NA. I also know the difference of doing service as a result of brief periods of gratitude

ability for our exact nature of our wrongs which stemmed from being self centered instead of being God centered. We were no longer enslaved to the past, we could continue on the process of developing our conscience with a loving God through changing and taking responsibility for ourselves in recovery.

Through the 6th step we are able to seek God help in the change of our personality. We are acknowledging that prayer is important part of that change in the acceptance for the need for help in healing our defect of charter (flawed personality). I can't we can?

The 7th step is a continuing journey of humility in action in our lives. Surrendering process at a deeper level is what we are witnessing, to see our need for acceptances of God to heal us at a deeper level. We are able to see the change from acting out when we didn't have the ability without the help of God to remove our shortcomings.

In the 8th step we take responsibility for are past and our actions and the part that we played in every situation in our lives. Through prayer and talking with are sponsor we are able to take a look at are defect and the damage we did to others without blaming others for are actions.

With the 9th step we are able to start the process of repairing the damage we have done over the years. God has awoken us to understand that we have damaged others with our self centered nature and now we have to amend our past mistakes. The spiritual awareness' of this step is that we know that the greatest amends we can make is changing ourselves so we stop harming others and to continue to make direct amends as long as it does not harm ourselves are others. We need to have the spiritual awareness to know if we have to make direct or indirect amends.

Through the 10th step we are spiritually motivated to continue a daily inventory of ourselves to keep the process of growing as a spiritual being. By knowing ourselves and our patterns we are able to know if we have done wrong and do have to continue the damage that are patterns of the past have showed. We can admit it the minute we've become aware of our wrongs and repair them before there is reversible damage done.

In the 11th step we acknowledge Gods power and his relationship we have developed through the process of the steps that we want to continue building this relationship through prayer and meditation to improve our consciousness contact with God. We have grown spiritually that we want his power and will to direct our lives and want to be humble to carry

emotions the reason we voted on an issue?

Did we vote yes or no because we wanted to be accepted by others within the group? Could we speak out with out fear of being judged by others within the group? How could we participate without knowing ourselves and the patterns of our past and how they affected us in our decision making process? Did we cast a vote out of fear, anger, resentment, or control? Can we honestly say we have voted without our emotions controlling us on an issue presented to the group?

That leads us to the 5th step on admitting to ourselves God and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. Can I go back to the group after I have made the mistake of trying to control the group by deciding that they should vote the way that I presented the issue by not presenting the other side? After purposely holding back information because of fear that they might have voted the other way and could not have the ability to see the truth can I admit to this? Can I admit to myself and to the group and to God that I was controlled by fear and held back information?

Asking God to heal exact nature of my wrongs and seeing how they affected the group was an eye opener in my life. After seeing how fear controlled me I could see the need to move onto the 6th step for healing of my defecated charter. I first had to take an inventory on my involvement with my home group and the service that I was involved in performing for the group. Was I able to see myself needing God to heal all areas of my life? Was I willing to take a look at the damage I had done in the name of Group Conscience? Could I be honest with God by asking him to heal me in this area? Was I prepared to be entirely ready to except Gods healing? I had to first accept that my defect of charter had done damage intentional or unintentional to the group. I had to do inventory and see that I had participating in trying to control the group direction whether or not it was the right direction for the group to develop as a group. Could I see the damage that was done by my need to control my environment because of fear? I had to be right at all cost regardless of the result. After feeling left alone in fear I became ready for God to heal my defective character and become humble.

Through the 7th step I could prepare myself to take action on this humility I had found that I could stop acting out on the damage fear had caused. I could pray for God to remove the shortcoming and stop the acting out from fear. Could I surrender my fear that the group was going to be alright by taking a back seat and not having to take all the responsibility

on of the group? Could I trust God would protect the group without having to react with anger and paranoia when I felt the group was making the wrong decision by following a strong personality instead of seeking all information before making a decision? Could I trust God when someone pointed out my shortcoming without reacting defensively? My first reaction is a feeling of a need to protect my ego that I may be wrong and others might be right. Could I surrender my anger, resentments, and my paranoia when I was fearful that we could be making a mistake? When W.S.O. Inc. sent letters to the facility that we held are meeting in that we were not NA [This was after the court case agreement with Grateful Dave that there was supposed to be joint call for peace in the fellowship by World Service Office, WSC, WSB'S and Grateful Dave, Baby Blue Era]. After this happened I ask God to remove the possibility of acting out of anger or from holding resentment for this action. I had grown to a point that I called an emergency area service meeting to share all the information with them that I had received and ask them what action the groups wanted to take. The letter from World Service Office was sent to all the NA facility that were in are area and are H-I facility that we were not a recognized as an NA area by the World Service Office and were riding on the NA name. We lost are H-I facility, however all are groups facility understood that there were differences within an organization and we are still in the same facility 21 years later. I ask God to remove my shortcoming so I did not have to act out by causing more problems within the area that we lived in. God removed the anger, resentment, and the paranoia so I could present all the information without acting out from the fear that I lived in. I had become humble to ask God to remove my shortcoming so I did not have to act out on my defeat of charter. Our group prayed a lot through those dark days of not knowing and we had to ask God to remove our shortcomings so we did not retaliate against those who had attempted to destroy are NA Area and the Groups that belonged to the Area. It took a lot of energy to become humble and ask for Gods help to remove are shortcomings.

How do we make a list of all the addicts we harmed in the name of Group Conscience? First we have to do an inventory to find out what issue we may have acted out on our defeated character or violated the group through our shortcomings. We have to first stop the blaming our problems on others and start to take a look at what part we have played in any given situation and be able to see the damage we have caused in the past so we do not have to make the same mistakes over again. How can we build a list of the addicts and groups we have harmed when we

has not been involved in the decision making process, we do not have to be told, and we can feel the affects of being out of Gods Will. As a result of the 11th step and direction of God Will we are ready for the 12th step.

We had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, I am using the word those because that was the word in our early literature utilized, and it is what makes sense of how I am writing from my experience with the previous steps. The first step is our first contact with being awoken spiritually, we came into the NA fellowship spiritually broken and needed to be bought back to life. That is were we first experienced love of the fellowship making us feel like we were the most important person at the meeting. We started to feel human that someone cared about us for whom where instead of what we had; we were spiritually coming to life as we experienced surrender to recovery. We finally were able to identify with people like us that could help us with our problem (Recovery from Addiction), we were no longer alone.

The second step bought us an understanding that there was a Greater Power than ourselves that could restore us to sanity. Our spirit started to believe in the group and what was working for them. We did not have to live with the insanity any longer, where desperation was replaced with hope for the first time. We started to have faith in something greater than ourselves; we no longer had to be the center of our world.

Step Three: we started to be able to make decisions with the help of others; we were able to practice our newfound faith with the ability to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood him. Just too be able to believe in a God through the help of others emphasized an excitement to our lives. The practice of simple prayer started to bring calmness to our very existence and feel worth while at last.

Step 4: bought an awareness' of a conscience of God to be able to help us with the ability for us to be honest with the task before us. We were able to take a thorough searching and moral inventory of ourselves for the first time. To have the ability to feel that we had a conscience; it made us understand that we were part of the human race and uplifted our spirit. To know that we know longer had to carry the baggage of are past sets us free to look at our ability to care about the addict and ourselves that we had assets in our lives.

In the 5th Step through having an ability to admit to another human being, ourselves and God showed that are self centered action started to change to a God centered person our spirit moved us to take respon-

the 11th step in action "God, as we endeavor to complete this work, we know that you are with us. We know that without your strength and inspiration we are not capable of the task before us. We know that this work is not our work, but yours. Each of us, in our own way, humbly petition You and use us as Your tools, according to Your will. We offer ourselves to you in this way knowing that You are Loving God and have all the power. In this work and in our lives—Thy will be done." We are acknowledging God by expressing that he exists with us, to give us strength and direction to write the Basic Text. We are humble acknowledging Him that he wrote the Book that were only instruments of His Will. We gained Gods knowledge through this prayer and his direction in what we wrote, it was a group prayer and group meditation seeking Gods Will in all we wrote. How power full of example is that for our fellowship as every addict participates within a Group Conscience to utilize our groups to carry out are tasks before us to make our message available to all addicts that they may not die before they hear that recovery is available to them, that no addict need die of the horrors of addiction without having opportunity that was made available to us. How powerful can prayer be to take an addict who was totally self-centered to become God Centered that we are able to care that much about another human beings suffering? I had a friend that when he shared he would share that we should take our shoes and dust of our feet, that we were walking on hollowed ground, that were in Gods presence. How do we know that we are doing Gods work? How do we know it His Will? It shares in the Basic Text that spiritual principles are never in conflict with any of the traditions of NA so would Gods will be? Does it mean that Gods Will; will never be in conflict with our spirit? How do we know when God is answering our prayers? Our home group conscience meeting is seeking Gods direction through prayer and meditation on how He wants us to carry the message, that He gives us the power to carry His will out and not ours. We know when there is conflict we need to put the issue on the back burner to God directs us to complete his tasks in Gods time and not ours. I look at the 11th step as becoming a living prayer through our actions and our actions reflects our ability to carry out Gods Will without conflict. Are we in conflict with are inner self? Do we have peace within, has the noise stop? Has our prayer life improved? Can sit and just be still? Does our ear have the ability to hear God from within? As groups are we aware of are surrounding within the meeting? As groups do we connect spiritually with are members? As a group we know when we are within God Consciousness, we can feel when we have made decisions that God

have not done a fellowship inventory on our past? We could bring up all the past violation that we perceive that happened in the past, however how many of us have collected all the information to have a clear picture of the NA history, are we forming broad viewpoints on others addicts opinion without facts to back up what they are saying? After studying history I have been able to see my part in making mistakes and have been able to build a list of addicts that I have harmed thinking I was doing the right thing at the time. Did we take the time to collect all information before participating in a collected group conscience? Were we caught up in the fear of what would happen if we did not take action? We owe amends, however if we do not see that we played a part in the damage that has been caused we are doomed to keep making the same mistakes over and over again. I have been in the process of doing an inventory of my involvement in the home group, area service, regional service, and world service in all areas. The first process I have utilized was collecting and reviewing old minutes of the home group and the addicts that were involved at the time and my involvement in the decision making process. Was I able to honest on my involvement with all the decision making process? Could I see if I damaged anyone with my defect of character? Can I remember the faces of the addicts and there responses to me? Did I collect all information before I participated in Group Conscience? Did I inflict my will on the group? By answering these questions I was able to build a list of all the addicts and groups of addicts that I have damaged.

Now after completing this list I have talked to the home group and admitted my mistakes of my past involvement in service and have been providing all information that I receive even if I disagree with it. I have worked on changing myself by looking at my past involvement and not making that same mistake again. The home group has taken action in changing the process that we have followed in the past by taking time before we make a decision. No issue is voted on before we do research on an issue. First we pray and then we take time to listen to all that are involved in the home group we invite God into our conscience {We have used the literature prayer in group conscience}. We made amends by changing our selves. We look at the traditions for are answers before we vote on an issue to make sure there is no conflict with are decisions and the spiritual principles. The group has made a decision to follow the traditions and not to negotiate them just to be part of the greater whole. We are participating in a service structure that does not dictate to the groups and is an informational structure that provides the service the

groups ask for from them. We hold ourselves accountable to those we serve and ask that we are also held accountable. Part of our amends is communicating before we act without concerns for other groups, we are inclusive not exclusive. The Group we serve believes that a real Group Conscience means that the group has been objectively, thoroughly, and succinctly informed of the probable consequences before taking action on an issue's as a group we carry a message of recovery that know addict need die tonight without hearing that they never have to use again. I have gone to old members that have left the group to admit by faults of my behavior for my shortcoming and the damage that I have caused to our relationships with no exceptions. The 9th step is an action step and it is not just reading of the list we have completed. This step needs to be taken seriously and needs to be done in Gods time and not ours. Talk it over with your sponsor and your group before taking action. This process will not be done over night, if we surrender and let of are ego at the door and approach the amends process with humility there is only healing for your self and the group. It is not to say that after you complete this amends process that there will not be amends left undone. Sometimes the only amends we can make is by changing ourselves are the group we participate within.

Does that mean we do not make mistakes if we have done the direct or indirect amends?

Our 10th step tells us that we need to take a daily inventory and promptly admit when we are wrong. As groups we have to on guard of that we do not drift away from are primary purpose of carry the message to the suffering addict. We have to also make sure we are not setting up a cast system or only communicating with like mind thinkers if we are too be inclusive and not exclusive. We always need to be looking at the traditions if we are to formulate a group conscience to be aware of ourselves on how we treat one another. We need to take inventory of ourselves on a continuing basis so we are aware if we have made a mistake so we can admit as soon as we become aware of it. The hardest thing that we do is admit that when we are wrong, we have to check ourselves at the door and let our ego out of the equation so that you can be our eyes and ears. As groups we need to take a daily inventory on how we carry the message of Narcotics Anonymous. What does the message mean to us? Do we carry a clear message? As a group are we there to help the addict that is reaching out for help? As a trusted servant of the group I need to be aware of my action in that position. Do I know when I have

carried my will and not the groups? Have I listened to the members of the group, have I heard them? If I have violated them can I admit to them without trying to defend my action? Do I have the humility to follow the group conscience? Can I see myself for truly whom I am without a distorted viewpoint of myself? Is being made aware of a mistake and admitting them are two different issues. Can I really admit to a wrong without telling the group or another human being that I have wronged them? Do I need a conscience to see my mistakes? Can I admit if I have violated the groups that I served by not being directly responsible when I did not ask the groups before I took action on there behalf without seeking direction? After taking a daily inventory and promptly admitting when we are wrong we can see the effects of our mistakes and we can see the benefits of Gods Spirit in are rooms, we become aware of God conscience in its greatest work. We can see the spirit come to life within the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, we can see and feel when we have harmed someone just by looking at there face or body language for we can see there response. We know how we affect someone because we are becoming a spiritual being we are longer self centered beings; we have become God Centered and are prepared for the 11th step.

The 11th step talks about the underlying principle of this step are God consciences and are awareness and empathy of other people. Through prayer and meditation we improve our relationships with God as we understand him. How do we do this as a group? How has your personal relationship with God improved as a result of applying this step? When I first started working the 11 step I found that I had been asking God for many of things before, like giving me the power to stay clean, remove the desire to use, to heal my defeated charter, and to remove my shortcomings. Now the step was asking me to seek God will through prayer and meditation to improve my conscience contact with him, asking only for knowledge of his will and the power to carry it out. The key words were Gods Will Prayer, Meditation, His Will, and the Power to Carry it out. Prayer was talking to God, just like I talked to my sponsor seeking his direction; the meditation was listening for direction for my life, my sponsor would guide me through the steps. So how did I hear God speak to me? How does the group hear God direction? When we had a silent prayer for the suffering addict at the beginning of the meeting and at the end of meeting at times we could feel Gods presence in the room when we took the time to reflect on how we carried the message to the suffering addict. We cared and expressed our empathy for the addict through our prayer. The literature prayer in the Basic Text is example of