



Never Alone

Nov. 2016

The Anchorage Area NA Newsletter

The Meaning of our NA symbol

The Importance of God (Part 5 of 5) By Frank Z

The "Service Prayer of NA" begins by inviting God's power in our lives when we repeat these words:

"GOD, grant us knowledge that we may write according to Your Divine precepts. Instill in us a sense of Your purpose. Make us servants of Your will and grant us a bond of selflessness, that this may truly be Your work, not ours—in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction."

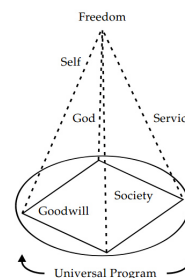
(Note: In various meetings, the word "act" or "work" is often substituted for the word "write" in the opening sentence.)

NA is a simple spiritual, not religious program. It is important to know that you will hear God mentioned in our meetings. What we are referring to is a Higher Power or God of our understanding. The NA Basic Text explains it well – "Our concept of God comes not from dogma but from what we believe and from what works for us. Many of us understand God to be simply whatever force keeps us clean.

The right to a God of your understanding is total and without any catches. ... The only suggested guidelines are that this Power be loving, caring and greater than ourselves."

When I arrived at Narcotics Anonymous I selfishly sought out help fully realizing I was physically mentally and spiritually unable to help anyone and wasn't even able to care for myself. The fellowship cared for me and held me in their loving arms and taught me how to care for myself. You showed me society. What I heard you say was that, "We found that Power here, in NA, in the program, in the meetings, and in the people. This is the spiritual principle that has worked for us to live drug-free a day at a time; and whenever a day is too long, then five minutes at a time. We can do together what we could not do alone. We invite you to use our strength and our hope until you have found some of your own. There will come a time when you too may want to share with someone else what has been freely given to you." In gratitude, through direction and out of a new sense of obligation I learned about service. Somewhere In this process I found a relationship with God as I understand Him. Many of us experience a profound spiritual awakening as a result of actively applying the Twelve Steps in our lives. Most of us continue to experience change and growth in our spiritual orientation as we continue to live the program.

I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother, and I found all three.
-Words from William Blake



Step 6 and 7: Freedom from self

-Nick B.

Step Six. "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Step 7. "Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings."

Steps 6 and 7 are my favorite steps because they offer a relief from the burden of self. They are a path to freedom from the patterns of behavior which, in many cases, have been the source of lifelong pain. This encompasses everything from using, to dishonesty, to how I interact with those around me.

Every time I have done a fourth and fifth step, I finish with a craving for change. Without fail I subconsciously think, "now that I know my inner workings so well there is no way that I will repeat this behavior". Just as it was with my using, I run headlong into a brick wall when I find that my willpower and knowledge alone is often insufficient to get me to change and to be happy in my change.

At some time in my life, I learned that I can use guilt and self punishment as a substitute for real change and it is my first resort when faced with the need for change. This self flagellation allows me to feel like I am doing something about the problem. If I can just FEEL bad enough about it, maybe I will remember how bad this feels and choose not to do it

next time! (Sound familiar?) Unfortunately I am an addict, and guilt, shame, and punishment don't work for me. It just gives me an excuse to not make a real changes..

The real key for me to work these steps has been to get to a point when I am willing to turn my defects over to my higher power rather than try to fix myself and pridefully demand I be made perfect. This usually requires a lot of pain. I have to accept that my defects are there for a reason. They are coping mechanisms that have helped me survive both a difficult world and my difficult self. I am quite sure God knows we are going to be perpetually flawed, and when I allow God to run my life he uses defects of character in positive ways. I don't have to be perfect to have God's grace. A great example of this for me is when I was a newcomer I wanted to be liked, to a fault. I would pretend to be whatever you wanted to make sure you liked me. While this caused me a lot of pain in life it also saved my life when I came into the program because I wanted to be liked by people in the program. It helped motivate me to work my steps, go to meetings, and do service work. I figured if I was like you guys you would like me. I had to deal with this defect as I grew in the program, but at the time I needed this defect, it was actually an asset that saved my life. This reminds me that it is not my job to decide when and

how a defect is supposed to be removed. Even the most meaningless and painful defects have still been an asset when I, later on, am able to help a sponsee or friend through the same problem.

Unfortunately (for me, anyways) I think this process of self will, shame, guilt and pain are part of the process. In fact, I recommend getting on with failing at self control as soon as possible! Just like with my using, I cannot admit defeat and turn defects over until I am out of ideas and am willing deep down to let God do his thing with my life. The keys to this for me have been forgiveness and prayer. As long as I hang on to my guilt and shame there is no room for God. I still want to "change" on my own using my flawed tools. When I find myself starting to forgive myself for my defects rather than feeling anger or shame, I know that I am getting close to turning the defect over. When I take the action of forgiving myself (not excusing or rationalizing myself, mind you..) I am letting God take charge of the situation. I am accepting that God has a reason for who I am and what I will be. When I do that, I am finally set free from the burden of self.



Anchorage Area of NA

Helpline: 907-277-5483



AASCNA
Thanksgiving
Narathon

Come join in on around the clock games, activities, and fellowship!!

Speaker Meetings:
Wednesday and Thursday @ 7:00 pm

Narathon Meeting every odd hour
(9pm, 11pm, 1am etc.)



Doors Open:

Wed, Nov. 23rd
6:00pm

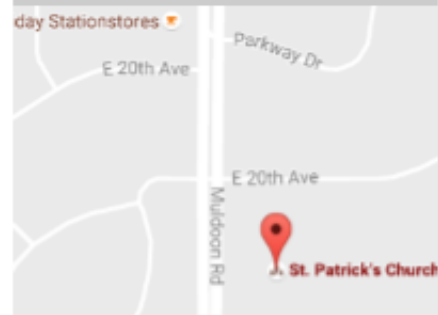
Until:

Fri, Nov. 25th
10:00am

Location:

**St. Patrick's
Church**

2111 Muldoon Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99504



**To sign up to bring food,
chair a meeting, service,
or for general questions
contact:**

Jen B. (907) 201.0166

-or-

Rob T. (907) 830.7628