

CLEAN TIMES

Southwest Area of Narcotics Anonymous Newsletter **May 2020**
www.cirna.org - swananarcoticsanonymous.com - www.na.org

The Exact Nature of Humility

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We gain a new understanding of the principle of humility as we work this step. We've most likely been under the impression that we were somehow bigger or more visible than other people. Through working the Fifth Step, we find that few of our actions deserve exaggerated attention. Through our self-disclosure, we feel connected with humanity, perhaps for the first time in our lives.

As we share our most personal feelings and our most carefully guarded secrets, we may experience anguish. However, many of us have looked up and seen unconditional love in the eyes of the person hearing our Fifth Step. The feelings of acceptance and belonging we experienced at that moment helped us to feel a part of the program.

The knowledge that we are about to face feelings we have long avoided may cause a rise in our anxiety level, but we go on, encouraged by our sponsor to trust the God of our understanding. The first thing we must realize is that the Fifth Step is not a quick fix for a painful situation. If we work this step expecting our feelings to go away, we are expecting the steps to

numb us the way drugs did. We review our first four steps and see that their purpose is to awaken our spirits, not deaden our feelings. We will need support and understanding to cope with our feelings. If we choose an understanding individual to make our admissions to, we will have all the support we need.

Although there is no requirement that the listener must be our sponsor, most of us choose to share our inventory with him or her. By doing so, we are most likely to benefit from the full range of experience another recovering addict has to share. After all, who can better understand what we are attempting than those who have done it for themselves? Addicts more experienced in recovery than we are will already have dealt with the matters we are just beginning to face. Such people can share with us their experience and the solutions they have found through working this step. The bond we share with our sponsor will strengthen our connection with the program and increase our sense of belonging.

The person who listens to our Fifth Step should be someone who understands the process of recovery we are involved in and someone who is willing to help us through it. We have found that an ideal listener will have enough compassion to honor our feelings, enough integrity to respect our confidences, and enough insight to help us keep the exact nature of our wrongs within our field of vision. Knowing that we are sharing our inventory, she or he will help us to avoid getting sidetracked by blaming others for the

things we've written about in our Fourth Step.

Although we know we are going to derive meaningful benefits from working this step, we may still need to take a moment to reaffirm our surrender and the decision we made in the Third Step. We can ask a Power greater than ourselves for the honesty, courage, and willingness to work this step. To invite God into this process, we may want to say a prayer. The prayer can be anything that reaffirms our commitment to recovery. Praying with the person hearing our Fifth Step can be a profoundly intimate experience.

cont. page 2)

Tradition Five

"Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." (page 4)

Virtual Road Trip NA Meetings Worldwide

(page 3)



Fifth Concept

"For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined." (page 4)

LOCAL EVENTS

Due to California's prolonged "Safer at Home" mandate, local area/region events have unfortunately been canceled (more details page 5)

submit your artwork, homemade recovery puzzles, poetry, or clean date to swanacleanetimes@gmail.com

Not only do we pray to ask for strength and courage, many of us also ask our Higher Power to listen as we make our admission. Why is it so important that we also make our admission to God? Because this is a spiritual program, and our whole purpose is to awaken spiritually. Our willingness to approach our Higher Power openly with our past and who we are is central to our recovery. In the past, some of us felt that we weren't worthy of a relationship with God. Our secrets blocked our ability to feel any acceptance or love from that Power. When we reveal something about ourselves, we draw closer to our Higher Power and experience the unconditional love and acceptance which springs from that Power. The feeling that the God of our understanding accepts us, no matter what we've done, enhances our acceptance of ourselves. The positive relationship we are building with a Higher Power carries over into our relationships with others as well.

We may be surprised by the intensity of the partnership we are developing with our sponsor as we share our inventory. If we've never really been listened to before, we may be startled to discover that we are being asked questions about some fine point of our personal history or that our sponsor is jotting down notes while we share. Our self-esteem increases as we realize that what we have to share is worth such close attention. We may see deep compassion in our listener's eyes, showing us that our pain is understood. That compassion is one more assurance of the presence of a Power greater than ourselves.

Looking at and sharing the exact nature of our wrongs is not likely to be a comfortable activity. We

have looked back and seen how repeating the same patterns over and over again has kept us stuck in the same place. And we haven't just seen the surface behavior; we've seen the defects of character that have been behind our behavior all along. We start to realize that there is a difference between our actions and the exact nature of our wrongs. For instance, we may see example after example of situations where we lied in a vain attempt to make everyone like us. But those examples aren't the nature of our wrongs. The nature of these wrongs is the dishonesty and manipulation we were demonstrating each time we lied. If we look beyond the dishonesty and manipulation, we'll most likely find that we were afraid no one would like us if we told the truth.

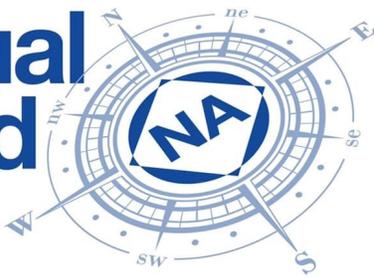
As we share our inventory, our sponsor will sometimes share some of his or her own experience with us. Our sponsor may cry with us or smile in recognition at some of the struggles we are now sharing. We may laugh together as we share some of the more comical aspects of our addiction and the ridiculous lies we told ourselves so that we could continue to live as we

were living. As we see how similar our feelings are to our sponsor's feelings, we realize that there are other people like us. We're human beings, nothing more, nothing less. Our self-obsession blinded us to this, making us feel unique. Suddenly we understand that other people, too, have painful problems and that ours are no more significant than anyone else's. Healing can take place when we see a glimpse of ourselves in the eyes of another. We find humility in that moment and a reason to hope that the serenity and peace we have been striving for are within our reach at last.

Our feelings of alienation fade as we experience an emotional connection with another human being. We are allowing someone entry to those places we've never before opened to another person. This may be the first time we've ever trusted another person enough to tell her or him about ourselves and allow that person to get to know us. We may be surprised at the closeness that develops between us and our sponsor. We're developing a give-and-take relationship based on equality and mutual respect, the kind that can last for a lifetime. *(cont. page 3)*



Virtual Road Trip



Make any meeting from the comfort of your own home

With the luxury of the internet, addicts are now more fortunate to continue to hear the message of hope without being at a physical meeting. Due to current events, society has become reliant on video-chatting and phone calls between their family, friends, and support groups. Not affiliated with NA, Zoom has pioneered the way we communicate today, especially across 12 Step fellowships everywhere.

Our lost dream of travel have awakened while the opportunity has arisen to travel across the world to hear the experience, strength, and hope from every addict in our fellowship.



Singapore

Wednesday, 6pm Pacific
(9am GMT+8 Thursday)
<https://zoom.us/j/2708194733>
Password: 397516
Meeting ID: 2708194733



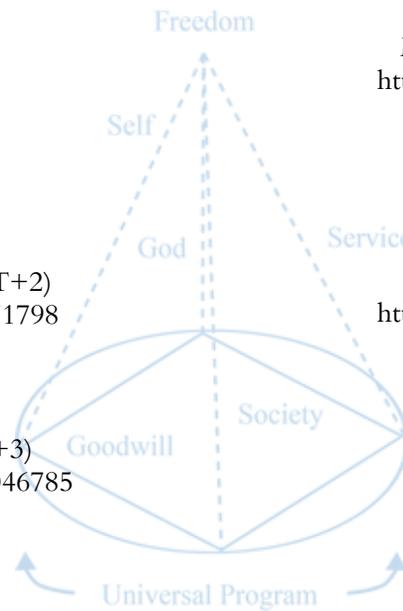
Budapest, Hungary

Friday's, 8:30am Pacific (5:30 GMT+2)
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/641271798>
(no password)



Greece

Tuesday, 9am Pacific (7pm GMT+3)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3445046785>
ID: 344 504 6785
PW: 284600



Grand Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Monday, 7pm Pacific (8pm Mountain)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6917148031>
ID: 6917148031
PW: PANA



Philippines

Friday, 6pm Pacific
(9am GMT+8 Saturday)
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2073170791>
Meeting ID: 207 317 0791
Password: pogisiKen



East Sydney, NSW Australia

Thursday, 2pm Pacific
(7am GMT+10 Friday)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83253018319>
(password embedded in link)



The Exact Nature of Humility (cont. from page 1,2)

After working our Fifth Step, we may feel a little raw or emotionally vulnerable. We've taken a major step in the healing process of recovery. This process could be thought of as "surgery of the spirit." We've opened up old wounds. We've exposed our most carefully constructed lies for the deceptions they were, and we've told ourselves some painful truths. We've dropped our masks in the presence of another person.

At this point, we may experience a dangerous urge to run from our new awareness and return to the familiar misery of the past. We may feel tempted to avoid our sponsor because he or she knows all about us now. It is very important that we resist such impulses. We must talk with other recovering addicts about our fears and feelings so we can hear the experience they have to share. We'll find that what we're going through is not unique and feel

relieved when others tell us they went through the very same struggles after they worked their Fifth Step.

Our awareness of our patterns of relating with others and the risk we have just taken in admitting them to another bring about a momentous breakthrough in our relationships. Not only do we form a close bond with our sponsor, but the risk we take in trusting this person will help us develop close relationships with others as well. We've risked trusting one person with our secrets and our feelings, and we haven't been rejected. We begin to have the freedom to trust others. Not only do we find out that others are trustworthy and deserve our friendship, we find that we are also trustworthy and deserving. We may have thought we were incapable of loving or being loved or ever having friends. We discover that these beliefs were unfounded. We learn, from the example of our sponsor, how to be a more caring friend.

Our relationships begin to change after this step, including the one we have with the God of our understanding. Throughout the process of the Fifth Step, we turned to that Power when we were fearful, and we received the courage we needed to complete the step. Our belief and our faith grew as a result. Because of this, we're willing to put more of ourselves into building a relationship with God. Just like any other relationship, the one we develop with our Higher Power calls for openness and trust on our part. When we share our most personal thoughts and feelings with our Higher Power, letting down our walls and admitting we are less than perfect, intimacy develops. We develop a certainty that our Higher Power is always with us and that we are being cared for.

- Certain paragraphs of this literature were used for this newsletter. For the full chapter, go online for the full length PDF of this literature.

Fifth Concept

“For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.”

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The key to applying the Fifth Concept is in defining the task that needs to be done, and the easiest way to apply it is right from the start. When we first create a service task, we should consider what kind of authority we must delegate in order for that task to be accomplished, and what kind of accountability we should require of those to whom we are giving that task. Then, one particular trusted servant, service board, or committee should be designated as the single point of decision and accountability for that assignment. This simple principle applies to all the services provided in Narcotics Anonymous, from the group to our world services.

When we decide a certain service task should be done, and clearly say which trusted servant, service board, or committee has the authority to accomplish the task, we avoid unnecessary confusion. We don't have two committees trying to do the same job, duplicating efforts or squabbling over authority. Project reports come straight from the single point of decision for the project, offering the best information available. An assigned service responsibility can be fulfilled swiftly and directly, because there is no question of whose responsibility it is. And if problems in a project arise, we know exactly where to go in order to correct them. We do well when we clearly specify to whom authority is being given for each service responsibility.

The single point of decision we define for each service responsibility is also a single point of accountability. As we've already seen in the Fourth Concept, and as we shall see further in Concept Eight, accountability is a central feature of the NA way of service. When we give our trusted servants responsibility for a particular service task, we hold them accountable for the authority we've delegated them. We expect them to remain accessible, consistently providing us with reports of their progress and consulting with us about their responsibilities.

Accountability does not mean that we delegate authority only to take it right back. It simply means that we want to be informed of decisions our trusted servants are considering as they go about the tasks we've assigned them. We want to have the opportunity to impact those decisions, especially if they directly affect us. And we want to be kept up-to-date on each responsibility we've assigned to the service structure so that, if something goes wrong, we can take part in making it right.

The Fifth Concept helps us responsibly delegate our authority for NA services. In exercising the Fifth Concept, we make a simple, straightforward contract with our trusted servants. Right from the start, they know what we are asking of them, what decisions they are expected to make themselves, and to what degree we will hold them accountable for the service work they do on our behalf. Exercise of Concept Five is not a task to be taken lightly. It calls for us to carefully consider the service work we want done; to clearly designate who should do that work; to delegate the authority to do it; and to maintain accountability for those duties. It takes effort to conscientiously apply Concept Five, but the results are worth the effort.

- Certain paragraphs of this literature were used for this newsletter. For the full booklet, go online for the full length PDF of this literature.



Tradition Five

“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.”

Twelve Traditions, Sixth Edition Basic Text - Copyright © 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, 2008 by Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

The Twelfth Step of our personal program also says that we carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Working with others is a powerful tool. “The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.” For the newcomers, this is how they found Narcotics Anonymous and learned to stay clean. For the members, this reaffirms their commitment to recovery. The group is the most powerful vehicle we have for carrying the message. When a member carries the message, he is somewhat bound by interpretation and personality. The problem with literature is language. The feelings, the intensity, and the strengths are sometimes lost. In our group, with many different personalities, the message of recovery is a recurring theme.

What would happen if our groups had another primary purpose? We feel our message would be diluted and then lost. If we concentrated on making money, many might get rich. If we were a social club, we could find many friends and lovers. If we specialized in education, we'd end up with many smart addicts. If our specialty was medical help, many would get healthy. If our group purpose were anything other than to carry the message, many would die and few would find recovery.

What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.

- Certain paragraphs of this literature were used for this newsletter. For the full chapter, go online for the full length PDF of this literature.

Dan D. 5/01/1981
 David S. 5/02/1990
 David V. 5/05/1988
 Kelsey F. 5/07/2010
 Aaron E. 5/09/2013
 Diana B. 5/09/2018
 Amanda T. 5/09/2016
 Tami B. 5/12/2010

MAY

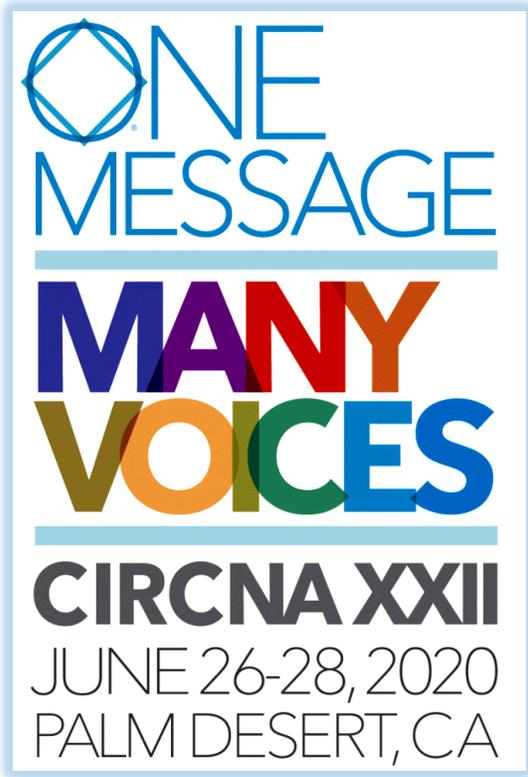


ANNIVERSARIES

Eric A. 5/14/2004
 Merissa M. 5/15/2004
 Brendan W. 5/17/2008
 Ann P. 5/19/1978
 Bridget F. 5/19/2016
 Madelyn C. 5/23/1979
 David F. 5/10/2013
 Brian S. 5/29/2013

LOCAL EVENTS

Due to California's prolonged "Safer at Home" mandate, local area/region 'in person' events have unfortunately been

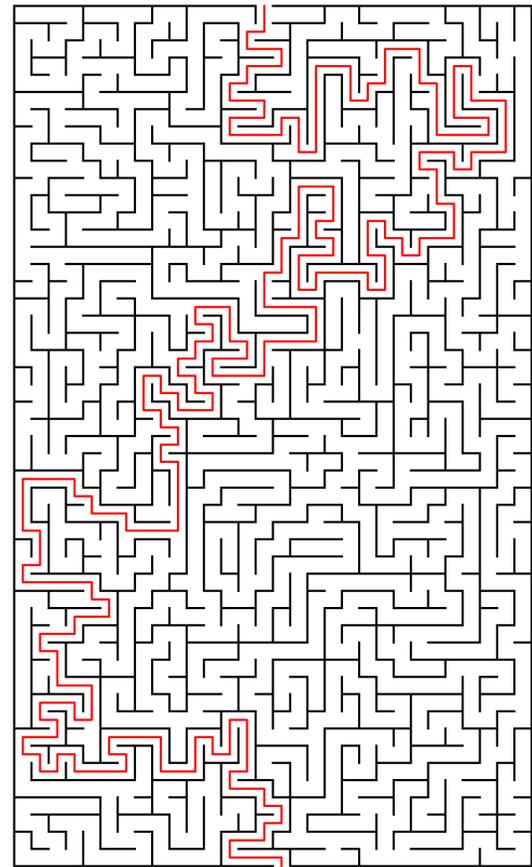


**ONE
MESSAGE**
**MANY
VOICES**
CIRCNA XXII
 JUNE 26-28, 2020
 PALM DESERT, CA

CANCELED



For more resources and updates, visit our area and regional websites



I	H	N	E	R	G	A	C	S
E	Q	R	A	S	C	H	I	N
C	A	S	H	I	N	G	R	E
G	C	E	S	N	I	R	A	H
N	I	H	C	A	R	E	S	G
S	R	A	G	E	H	I	N	C
A	S	Q	R	C	E	N	H	I
R	E	I	N	H	S	C	Q	A
H	N	C	I	G	A	S	E	R