



SEVEN MINUTES

The Nicotine Anonymous Quarterly

A FORUM FOR NICOTINE USERS WHO DON'T USE

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Great Expectations

Laura G., Dallas

From the first time I smoked a cigarette, I expected nicotine to do something for me. At fourteen years old, I probably expected nicotine to help me get back at my "stupid parents," or to make me popular at school, every teenager's deepest desire. But using nicotine didn't end after those needs weren't met. I continued to believe in my hero and friend - the cigarette. Even though nicotine had failed me time and time again, I still believed that it would do something for me. What faith!

I expected nicotine to help me concentrate and get good grades in college. I expected it to help me forget how empty my pockets were from time to time, so I didn't mind spending a little money on them. After that, I expected cigarettes to help me celebrate, to help me get out of bed, to help me pass the dead time while I was driving or home alone, staring at the TV set. Nicotine was also expected to help me relieve stress, to relate well to others, including my smoking husband, and to keep my weight down. Then there was the expectation that cigarettes should make me more interesting, more eccentric, cool. It seems odd now that I thought the mystique of smoking was the way to change myself into a better person. I especially wanted people to notice my smoking, to see me kill myself one cigarette at a time, because I expected nicotine to help make everyone else feel sorry for me.

Nicotine was becoming the one answer, the one solution, to every problem or crisis in my life, from the tiniest inconveniences to the biggest life-changing events.

These and all of my countless other expectations were never met by nicotine. But, today I am grateful. It took coming to Nicotine Anonymous meetings and sharing with others to transform that same unbreakable faith in nicotine's power, into a faith that God's power will help me if I let him. So today, instead of believing in the power of nicotine, I distrust it. Instead, I am learning to put my trust in God to help me find answers in life and to find serenity. May God bless the Nicotine Anonymous program and its members who have helped me change my expectations.

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Our Preamble

Nicotine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women helping each other to live our lives free of nicotine. We share our experience, strength and hope with each other so that we may be free from this powerful addiction. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using nicotine. There are no dues or fees for Nicotine Anonymous membership; we are self supporting through our own contributions. Nicotine Anonymous is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization or institution; does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. Our primary purpose is to offer support to those who are trying to gain freedom from nicotine.

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THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over nicotine--that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other nicotine users and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps reprinted and adapted here with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that A.A. is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism - use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise. The original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are reprinted above.



From the Editor

Recently we lost a valued member of our local group to death. It was a difficult thing for all of us to accept. But accept we did. We had to. For you see, one thing Clara reminded us of over and over again was, "you have to take life on life's terms." That's what the serenity prayer is all about - taking life the way it comes. Curve balls and all. This fact is essential to recovery.

When we're fighting against the tide, trying to live life on our own terms, the burden becomes too great and the task is too futile. But when we rest and put H.P. in the drivers seat we find the serenity we need to enjoy this life he's given us. Not only that but as we practice living life on life's terms, we are able to see that life really isn't out to get us. Knowing that fact frees us from defensiveness and makes it possible for us to give our love away to those we once thought meant to hurt us.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..." Accept life on life's terms. A simple concept yet a necessary recipe for an abundant life rich in love and serenity

Meet Your Officers

In April, we elected three alternate officers, **Martha K.**, chair; **Joe S.**, treasurer and **Donna E.**, secretary. Our emeritus officers include **Camille S.**, chair and **Lynn R.**, treasurer. **Rodger F.** and **Steve M.** serve as at-large officers. Three people take over their active year as officers - **John O.**, chair, **John N.**, treasurer and **Cat H.**, secretary. To get to know them better, I've asked them each a little about their recovery.

Q: *What is your quit date? How many years were you addicted?*

John O.: 10/3/92; sixteen

John N.: 3/17/85; thirty-five

Cat H.: 8/13/96; eighteen

Q: *How did you hear about Nicotine Anonymous?*

John O.: A friend of my mother's in recovery told me about the program. Before attending my first meeting, I asked him to be my sponsor.

John N.: **Mary D.** of Anaheim, who brought Nicotine Anonymous to Orange County.

Cat H.: I knew Twelve Step programs existed from films and sitcoms. I looked up the word 'nicotine' in the phone book white pages.

Q: *What "drove" you to quit?*

John O.: My wife's urgings in conjunction with my daughter's forthcoming birth were an impetus, but my anger when I realized how enslaved I was to this drug was a driving force.

John N.: Unable to breath and decided I wanted to live.

Cat H.: The last straw - my mother was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. The sudden realization of mortality.

Q: *What is your favorite step? Favorite meeting topic? Favorite Slogan?*

John O.: Just the spiritual ones (all twelve); any step or tradition; "It just keeps getting better and better," although "Nicotine is a drug" is a close second since it is exclusively ours.

John N.: First half of Step One; How to Change My Behavior; "God Can Handle This" ---(whatever this is)

Cat H.: Four; Gratitude; "One Day at a Time"

Q: *What did you learn in a meeting that helped you?*

John O.: Everything I've learned in meetings has really helped me. If I have gone to a meeting and not learned something, it is due to my own shortcomings, not the meeting's. The one thing I have learned in every meeting I have been to is that I am loved, and I am worthy of recovery available to me through the Twelve Steps of our fellowship.

John N.: The urge will go away if I don't feed it.

Cat H.: Love and connection between addicts really makes a difference. I'm astonished at the quality of life my relationships in the fellowship have given me.

Q: *Advice for a newcomer?*

John O.: Immerse oneself in our fellowship. Pray, get a sponsor, go to as many meetings as possible, pray, read the first step 12 times, read the Serenity Prayer, Twelve Steps and Tips pamphlets, pray, make lots of phone calls, take a service commitment and then pray a little more.

John N.: Keep coming back

Cat H.: It may sound cliché but keep coming back! Everything that is good about my life started with a desire - my desire to quit smoking, to eat better, to exercise, to serve this organization.

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