



H.A.W.S. **MAINLINE**

Heroin Anonymous World Services
Monthly Bulletin

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This informational bulletin's purpose is to increase communication between the groups of Heroin Anonymous throughout the world.



DECEMBER **2022** ISSUE



Photo by: [Nong V.](#)

Greetings from the H.A. World Services Board! And Happy Holidays if you're into that kinda thing.

Here is some information to help you stay up to date with all things Heroin Anonymous. For those of you Mainline subscribers that are new, the HAWS board is compiled primarily of H.A. members who meet monthly to tend to H.A. business throughout the year.

Contact The Mainline Bulletin:

*All correspondence will be filtered by our H.A. bulletin committee at: haworldbulletin@gmail.com.
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Virtual Meetings: *Do you want to attend an H.A. meeting 1,000 miles away from your very own couch? Do you find it interesting to hear heroin addicts from another region share their experience, strength, and hope?* We have 28 active zoom meetings in 10 different states! Go to HeroinAnonymous.Org, click meetings, and click the link for online meetings. Make sure to convert the time zone! Email HawsWebmaster@HeroinAnonymous.org if you notice any inaccuracies or want to add a meeting.

HAWS Positions: Looking for more involvement with H.A.? Then service with the HAWS board may be right for YOU! Our nominations committee is continuing to screen applications, interview, and recommend candidates to join the board. If you are interested in the following positions, please send service resumes, references, and inquiries to:

HawsSecretary@HeroinAnonymous.org

- **At-large Voting Member:** This position is for new members to the board. Its sole function is to show up and help us to discuss and vote on decisions. Eventually these members join other committees and may be asked to fill other roles.
- **Non-Addict Advisor:** This is someone who is not a member of H.A. They may be an expert in recovery fellowships, non-profits, or possess various business skills that they wish to volunteer for the good of H.A.
- **Heroin Addict Advisor:** This is someone who is a member of H.A. This person will utilize their experience with H.A. and 12-step service to advise the board.

In loving service,

Anna A., HAWS Outreach Chair

HawsOutreach@HeroinAnonymous.org

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COUNT MY BLESSINGS

Personal Story: Benjamin D. Ashland, OR

Everyday I wake up early. I find this a necessity for sobriety. Nothing starts my day better than sipping coffee in the cold, early morning fog, counting my blessings.

I remember the days of suffering. I look back on the path I've chosen to travel. I compare every aspect of my life today to where I was a year ago. Not a single thing looks the same. A job, a warm bed, a home, and my family. I spend a good 15 minutes barefoot on the back porch just to remind myself where I've been. I think about the time I've spent lost, homeless, and hopeless.

I find gratitude to be the cornerstone of my recovery. It is all humbling at the same time, to realize how fragile the balance of sobriety is, knowing I'm just one wrong choice away from being right back out there.

My morning reflection of gratitude and humility sets right any wrongs I may have in my mind. It helps me set goals for my day. It keeps me on the

right path. When I first came to meetings I didn't know what to share, I didn't feel I had much experience, strength, or hope, but I felt a deep sense of gratitude for my sobriety and the progress I had made, and so I shared that.

I've attended many different types of 12-step meetings in my journey of recovery. Having experienced the majority of my suffering at the hand of heroin addiction, I never had a full sense of belonging. I didn't have the singleness of purpose I was reading about. I knew what I had read was true, and I believed everything I heard, but I wasn't able to share the true nature of the grip of my addiction.

That was until I was invited to a meeting of Heroin Anonymous. It was there that I developed the spiritual foundation in recovery that I have today. It was in those meetings I found singleness of purpose.

-Benjamin D.

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FOR MANY YEARS I STRUGGLED

One Step at a Time: Matt R. Southbury, CT

I would burn my life to the ground through my heroin use and end up in an institution after which I could stay sober for a few months. Inevitably, I would have to get high and start the vicious cycle all over again. I would tell myself, if I get high one more time, it will quell the obsession and I can get back on track with my "Recovery."

This lie kept me sick for many years. It kept me from believing that only a spiritual experience could relieve me from my obsession with heroin. I tried all the human power I could muster to recover. I went to programs. I "put myself in the middle of the herd." I called people when I was thinking about getting high. I tried doing the "five" things every day. I tried to do it for my family, my ex-wife, and my job. I even tried doing it just for myself. Every time, I got high. I was defeated. I was fully defeated this time and believed that there was nothing I could do to stay sober. I believed I could not stay sober and that I would probably die a heroin addict.

Turns out, I was right. I could not stay sober. In order to recover, I was going to need

to have a spiritual experience; a psychic change; a vast change in the way I react to the world: the kind of spiritual experience that only the steps can produce. I asked a man who was experienced with the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" to take me through the steps. He directed me to write a fourth step and review it with him. I began to see where I had been wrong and I started thinking about others, instead of just myself. I was directed to become willing and ask God to remove my character defects. Then, I made a list of people I had hurt and became willing to make amends to them.

This is where I started to balk, what would these people think of me trying to make amends? I was a terrible person; I had done terrible things! Surely, they would cast me away! Why would I make myself a pariah? What kind of lunacy was I about to undertake? I sought the counsel of sober men in my life.

They all told me the same thing. If I trust in God, there is no need to worry about putting myself in a position of vulnerability. God would see me through it. They told me that If I turn my attention to God's work, and perform his work well,

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only then will I begin to feel spiritual growth. I began to make my amends, honestly trying my best to right the wrongs of my past. That is when I finally began to feel freedom. I was on my way to a spiritual awakening! Step 10 and 11 directions came in succession. I started to think of others all throughout the day and right my wrongs as I went along. I began to review my day at night when my head hit the pillow.

Where was I selfish, dishonest, resentful, and self-seeking? I asked for guidance in the morning and listened for direction. I still follow these directions to this very day. Then, I was directed to go out and help others. I was to pass on to them that which had been so freely given to me. This was impressed upon me from day one, when my sponsor told me the reason he was taking me through this book was so that I can turn around and take others through this book. It is written over and over in the book to help others.

"Nothing ensures immunity from alcohol (heroin) like intensive work with another alcoholic (heroin addict)." "For if he fails to enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others..." I mean, there is even a whole chapter dedicated to it! I fully believe that I must work with others in order to stay sober, and what an honor and a privilege that has been.

It is my purpose in life. For that, God keeps me sober today. It is the work he asks me to do, and I do it because I honestly want to help.

Imagine if no one was there to take me through the steps? I could not have figured it out on my own. That was my experience. I had read that book every time I went to rehab, and I never saw any directions in there.

I needed a sponsor, someone who was armed with the solution and with facts about himself, to help me understand what to do and how to do it. When I was able to start doing it for others, I finally had that spiritual experience as the result of the steps.

Today I am a changed man. I have certainly recovered from my heroin addiction. God did this for me. But I was asked to do one more thing. I was asked to practice these principles in all my affairs. All my affairs, not just in a meeting or around other sober people. I was to take what I learned and bring it with me as I went out into the world. At my job, in the grocery store, in traffic, wherever I might find myself. Most importantly, at home, with the people I love the most. I feel this can be the most challenging place to practice these principles. I am a work in progress and sometimes I still assert my will at home, which always backfires, but now I have a solution. I turn it

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over to God, ask how I can be helpful, admit my faults when I have done wrong, and ask God to show me how to be a beacon of hope instead of a purveyor of chaos. I always put the focus back on myself and ask what I can do better. When I take these actions, my life only gets better, never worse.

-Matt R.

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A PATH OF WHOLENESS

Tradition Twist: Erik S. Dana Point, CA

Anonymity is the foundation of equanimity. The 12 Traditions are a path of wholeness for our H. A. groups. Our Traditions guide me on the tumultuous river of group unity. I have attended business meetings and vehemently disagreed with others, others who love H.A., over the decisions made by the group.

Without the wisdom of our Traditions as they have been laid out, my passion and conviction would lead to separation and drowning in my own ego. That's a place I have experienced many times because I am often deluded by the thought that I think I know what is best for H.A. The 12th Tradition is the seemingly flimsy reed that often pulls me back to you.

The 12th Tradition guides me towards spiritual anonymity. Other Traditions focus on the nuts and bolts of when and where I should be anonymous. Tradition 12 points me squarely at the spiritual foundation upon which I can help groups of recovering and recovered heroin addicts build places of sanctuary in the raging sea of addiction. Without anonymity as the bedrock of how I act in these groups, I would not long survive. I must be equal so that we can be equal, or my egoic self gains a foothold and I begin to slip once again.

I was once a maverick, isolated and alone. I would have done anything to get and stay high. The practice of anonymity is the opposite of that. To quote the book 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, "The spiritual substance

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of anonymity is sacrifice... We realize that the sacrificial spirit--well symbolized by anonymity--is the foundation of (the Twelve Traditions)." Anonymity symbolizes how I trade egoic recognition for someone else's recovery. In essence I am asked to lay down my life for another.

I am not asked to give up living for anyone else. In a sense, I am asked much more. I am asked to give up my minutes and hours, the very essence of my life and my most valuable asset, so that you and I may truly live. The 12th tradition guides me to do this without recognition, I say guides because my first instinct is often towards wanting someone to recognize and applaud me. I need to be guided towards anonymity. Without this guidance I fail to realize the truth that each of us deep down inside carry the same amount of the divine, and it is only by allowing these pieces of the divine to come together as equals that I experience the true wholeness of recovery.

I am not a person of great faith. I doubt, wander, and question constantly. However, in recovery I have become a person of great

experience. My past is unshakable; it cannot be changed. The 12th Tradition has guided me to experience wholeness that I cannot deny. When I was using, service of any kind, especially without pay, was the last thing on my mind. There was always an angle. When I washed up on the shore of recovery and began to experience a wholeness that I had never known, I became willing to sacrifice my minutes and hours for the good of the group. I became willing to get commitments at meetings and do 12th step work. In becoming a part of the whole, equal to all other parts, I found wholeness.

Practicing anonymity is the foundation of my ongoing spiritual experience as a member of Heroin Anonymous. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

Through service I receive joy, a joy that was unattainable in addiction, the joy of being a part of. This joy of wholeness is realized more and more as I accept the gift of anonymity in the 12th tradition.

-Erik S.

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If you would like your meeting featured in our meeting spotlight or have any other content you would like to submit, please feel free to contact us at haworldbulletin@gmail.com.

Thank you!
The Folks at The HAWS Mainline

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