



# PRIDE

## From Surviving to Thriving

### Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Southern California Regional Narcotics Anonymous LGBTQ Committee is to provide outreach services to help the LGBTQ suffering addict to feel part of the life-saving fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. In accordance with our traditions, our outreach services will be inclusive of all suffering addicts. Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion

We believe that in reaching out to the LGBTQ addict, inclusive of any suffering addict, we will promote unity within the fellowship by helping those addicts to find their voices in service and help them to feel a sense of belonging within the community of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.



### Shedding the Armor

*“We are no longer merely surviving our circumstances. In fact, we are full of life and wide awake to experience all that the world has to offer. One of the greatest gifts of recovery is the ability to embrace ourselves for who we are and open our hearts to those around us.”*

*A Spiritual Principle A Day, page 73*

In Narcotics Anonymous, we are no strangers to the miracle of change. Each of us has experienced tremendous transformation through our own personal recovery and witnessed it through the recovery of others. At the same time, our society— change on a fellowship level in order to remain in step with the evolving society in which we serve as proud, productive members.

## A Raver's Reckoning

When asked about my career aspirations as a child, I wanted to be a mermaid veterinarian. Indeed, I was a flamboyant child who struggled with the confines of the polarized gender spectrum in the 1980s through my proclivities for fluidity, an overactive imagination, and my highly emotional nature. While these qualities would become superpowers later in life, they made me a prime target for bullying and ridicule at the time. As such, I learned early on that when the going gets tough, you dig a moat and fortify your walls. This survival strategy helped me persist through the formative years, but I didn't come out unscathed. In fact, along came character defects like trust issues, isolation, stoicism, cynicism, and terminal uniqueness, among many others.

After high school, I met a group of misfit ravers who not only embraced my idiosyncrasies but actively fostered their development. Little by little, I let my guard down and became permeable to their influence and lifestyle. For the first time, I began to feel a sense of budding confidence and personal pride; the top of the food chain was finally within eyesight. The common thread that united us all was a relentless, frequently reckless, pursuit of fun. Booze and drugs were the accepted, if not expected catalysts of good times and, as you can probably already foresee, it certainly wasn't a sustainable path.

When our laissez-faire attitude towards responsibility and depleted neurotransmitter banks began to have real-world consequences, this fun-loving group of pure pleasure seekers quickly devolved into a bad habit factory, cycling back on itself until folks either scattered to the wind or wound up dead. Luckily, I subsisted, but not without collateral damage. Seeking external means to address internal problems became my way of life, and I had an uncanny ability to disguise it from the world around me. Granted, I was spiritually devoid and routinely dishonest, but I had attained professional success, lived in several major cities, and was generally well-liked. It wasn't until 2018 when my desperation reached a point that would nearly cost me everything, which is a story for another day.

I used drugs for two reasons. First, drugs made internal affairs feel manageable. Secondly, drugs helped quiet the chaos of intrusive thoughts and self-deprecating narratives in my mind so that I could connect with others, socially and sexually. I used until it became a core part of my identity, which was at odds with my supposed value system. This misalignment resulted in more internal conflict, more anxiety, and subsequently, more using.

My experience in recovery has been like both an excavation and a renaissance. With the help of the rooms, the 12 steps, a God of my understanding, and a no-nonsense sponsor, I've begun the process of digging through the strata of cultural conditioning, other people's opinions, and inaccurate conclusions from childhood to discover my true, unsoiled self. In doing so, I've been able to nurse deep wounds and continuously improve myself to achieve goals beyond my wildest dreams. Recovery has an infinite return on investment – it works when I work it. Yes, it's a lot of work, but I'm worth it.

Matt H., Westside Area, CA



## From Fear-Based to Faith-Based

Hello all, my name is Kay and I'm an addict.

I have felt different my whole life. Separated from my parents when I was young, I was adopted into a loving household. Ever since I was four or five years old, I have felt out of place. Growing up I was bullied as a child with unconventional interests. I started to feel like I wasn't in the right body and started to have anxiety about how people saw me. From the very beginning it was fear based. At age seven I asked my mom if I could be a girl, and she said ok, but that was all. I felt like she didn't even care or understand, so I had a resentment against her for that.

For a long time I had been feeling different, and then I found out that I could get high and be relieved of the pain from within. So, at age nine I started to smoke pot and do coke. I was in the Scouts and there was a drug dealer there. He gave me anything he had and it was a mess.

I was caught at age 11 when I was high and smoking outside, and my dad, being a sober and clean person, offered to bring me to a meeting. At first, I was like what can he offer me, but when I went to my first NA meeting, I found out that I wasn't alone. I got a sponsor when I found the right person, and I started to do the steps.

Ever since then I have been going to meetings and through the way I have found God, cleaned house, and I try to help others on a daily basis. I have relapsed before, and it's natural for an addict to have resentments or reservations about using, but as a 17-year-old nonbinary person I'm proud of myself for getting clean at such a young age. My recovery date is June 4th, 2023 and I am so blessed to be sober and clean. Good luck and God bless!

-Kay M., Rhode Island

## Justice

I walked into NA a victim. I was a victim of injustices. Bullied for being gay. Excluded for not being white. It wasn't fair—I couldn't do anything to change my race or my sexuality. I felt trapped. I hated myself. I hated the world. I hated my parents. I was ashamed of who I was. I felt bad. Drugs made me feel sexy, wanted, free, and you know the rest. Justice was an important principle for me because of accountability. Good versus Evil. Good must win. Love must win. Justice must win. Fairness is righteous.

As I remained clean and recovered with the steps, many of the values I walked in with became unsustainable with the spiritual principles I was awakened to. I started asking questions of myself. What about justice? Is justice a spiritual principle? Justice has been a core of my being. Justice is good, right? Accountability is good, right?

I realized that with justice and fairness, there is a right and a wrong. There is a victor and a loser. Good and bad. I came to believe that justice is not a spiritual principle. I didn't get the justice I deserved when I got to NA. I was given mercy. Mercy is the spiritual principle I was given and mercy is a spiritual principle of NA. WOW...now what do I do? Who am I without justice?

This became a challenge for me. But the longer I kept my mind open, I found many opportunities to choose mercy instead of justice. Just as I am powerless over my addiction, I am also powerless over people, places, and things. I realized that I always had and still have free will. I can choose a higher, loving power or a lower, self serving, fearful power. I realized that EVERYONE has this choice. I always did, but the self serving power felt safer at first, and then it seemed to be the only one because it became a part of me. In recovery, I am finding a new way of life.

Life is not fair sometimes. Others' free will affects me just as my free will affects others and the people closest to me. I have no power over anyone else's choice or will. I have only have power over my own. I can choose justice or I can choose mercy. Justice seems to keep me in fear, anger and resentment. Mercy gives me peace. It takes practice. It is challenging. It is an opportunity. Life isn't fair. Others decisions and actions feel hurtful, sometimes unthinkable. As a member of Narcotics Anonymous I have a choice today.

-Marc O., Greater Hollywood Area

### WHAT'S THE TEA? (NA Announcements)

**SoCal LGBTQ Committee Meeting** - 2nd Saturday of every month. 1pm to 3pm.

Zoom ID 2021001953      PW 232323

**SoCal NA LGBTQ Meeting Directory:** <https://todayna.org/todaynawpdocs/LGBTQ/Directory.pdf>

**SoCal LGBTQ Committee Info:** <https://todayna.org/lgbtq>

**NA Pride is accepting submissions! If interested, please email:** [nalgbtqnews@googlegroups.com](mailto:nalgbtqnews@googlegroups.com)