

In active addiction, insanity, institutions, and death are the only ends. In recovery, through the help of a Higher Power and the steps of NA, anything is possible. Creative action is not a mysterious procedure, although it is an inside job in rebuilding or reintegrating our disordered and fractured personalities. Often, it means simply listening to those hunches and intuitive feelings that we think would benefit others or ourselves, and acting on them spontaneously. Here is where many basic principles of action become apparent. We are then able to make decisions based on principles that have real value to ourselves. The purpose of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous becomes clear as we find that dependence on a Higher Power, as we each understand it, brings self-respect and self-reliance. We know that we are neither superior nor inferior to anyone; our real value lies in being ourselves. Freedom, with responsibility for ourselves and our actions, appears to be foremost in our lives. We keep and expand freedom through daily practice; this is the creative action that never ends. Goodwill, of course, is the beginning of all spiritual growth. It leads to affection and love in all our actions. These three goals, freedom, creative action, and goodwill, when shown in service in the fellowship, without seeking personal rewards, bring about changes whose ends we cannot predict or control. Therefore, service is also a Power greater than we, and has significant meaning for all.

MY GRATITUDE SPEAKS WHEN I CARE AND WHEN I SHARE WITH OTHERS THE NA WAY

Excerpt from- From IP#5- Another Look

- Would you like to be featured in our upcoming Clean Sheets? Please share your NA-related stories, poems, memes, cartoons, your individual experiences-working steps, how NA has helped you, Being of Service…
- Are you having an aNAversary soon- Please share your Clean Date so we can celebrate your Recovery!

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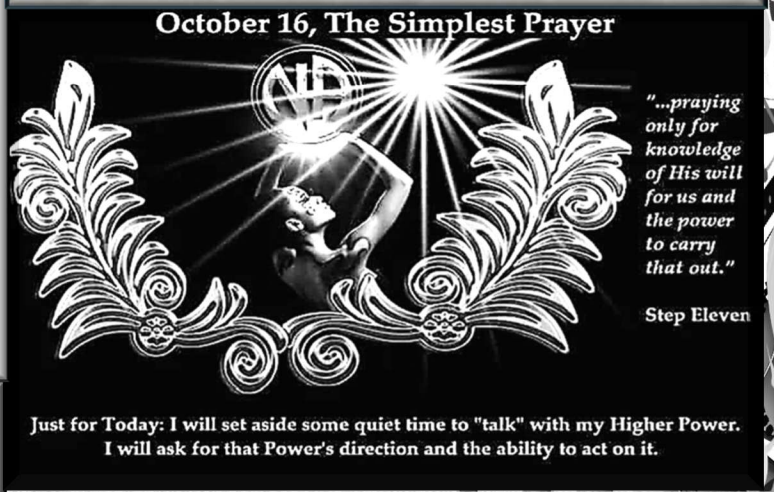
JANUARY 5th- Seeking Connection Instead of Distraction

We try to minimize distractions so that we can concentrate on knowledge arising from our own spiritual connection.
—NA Step Working Guides, Step Eleven, "Prayer and Meditation"

Distractions are tricky: The more we try to get rid of them, the more power they seem to gain. As an example, if we spend the entire meeting thinking about not taking our phone out, we probably hear just as little of what is shared as if we'd had the phone out the whole time. Worse yet, if we put all of our energy into thinking about other people on their phones, how well are we really listening? As with our connection to the meetings we attend, we improve conscious contact with a Higher Power when we focus on the contact, rather than the distractions. We all have plenty of distraction techniques that give us ways to avoid being present in the current moment. Maybe we stare at a screen for long stretches to distract us from being sad or angry or bored. Maybe we get pulled out of our meditation by hearing the neighbor's dog bark its head off or the trash truck thundering down the street or . . . air moving.

No matter what the source of distraction, internal or external, real or imagined, distractions interfere with our conscious contact—with ourselves, each other, and our Higher Power. How do we focus on maintaining our connection? In a meeting, it's as simple as listening closely to what is being shared. If our mind drifts to the phone in our pocket (or the one in someone else's hand), we simply bring our attention back to the person who is sharing. In meditation, we simply listen for "whatever's there." If we catch our mind drifting, we simply bring our attention back to the present moment. By focusing on where we are in the moment, we can resume our connection with our Higher Power. We listen, we share, and we often find that we already have exactly what we need.

Listening and sharing well in meetings can help me better listen and share with my Higher Power. If my mind drifts away from conscious contact, I won't dwell on the distraction—I will simply shift my attention back to the moment I am sharing with my Higher Power.



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