

YEAR XL - NO. 1 - MARCH 2025



SERENIDADE^{2.0}



SERVICE EDITORS



PAULO O. - GRATEFUL ADDICT

Serenidade magazine is back, like a Phoenix reborn, now in digital format. That's why we decided to call it "Serenidade 2.0".

The premise is simple: a magazine without the costs and complications inherent to the paper format, capable of reaching as many addicts as possible. As for the magazine itself, we've tried to keep the initial concept and add new ideas, such as giving greater prominence to recovering addicts, tackling sensitive topics and appealing for more involvement from those it's aimed at.

The magazine is created by addicts for addicts. As the Portuguese fellowship also has more and more foreign recovering addicts, we decided to make it bilingual.

It's going to be quite an adventure - we hope you enjoy it!

DIANA C. - GRATEFUL ADDICT

I think we can all agree that, as Adults, there is a trait that cuts across all of us: a certain need to challenge or question everything that surrounds us, the old "being against".

Today, we discovered that there is something profoundly subversive and beautiful about those who choose to simply be Present!!!

Being Present requires Courage. Being Present also means Serving. It requires Believing even when you don't have the answers. Even when your head screams "run away". It means being there even when you don't feel like it. It's simply being there because today we have chosen to be the other side of "against"!

There are those who say that the world is upside down... but the truth is that many of us have seen the world from the craziest and most unthinkable angles and are still here to tell the story and pass on the message, so we have no doubt that the secret really is still the same: the same message, the same faith, the same program, the same people.

But times change. Wills change. Stimuli change. Obsessions change. Everything seems to attract us to distraction, to anesthesia, to an unhealthy performance, everything has to be done in a hurry and very quickly.

We multiply our characters, at home, at work, at our children's school, at the gym... Speaking about ourselves, truthfully, without filters, without "likes", seems to have become almost a revolutionary act.

If there's one thing we know about addiction, it's that it's insidious; and these seem to be times when it's disguised itself particularly well. It no longer presents itself as just a syringe, a pipe or a bottle! Today, it's dressed up as Performance. It's disguised itself as Urgency and Productivity. As infinite scrolling. As a toxic relationship that's "not really that". As silence that's become comfortable. Even as "resilience".

If we used to openly run away from Pain... today, we seem to be running away even from the possibility of Being Happy! And that's why this magazine sets out to go deeper. Yes, with play. Yes, with games. Yes, with provocation. With irony. Laughter is always part of Recovery! But we propose to broaden the sharing and debate: contradictions, emptiness, relapses, sex, money, motherhood, ageing, shame, self-love, bodies that feel again, children who don't forget, partners who don't stay, those who stay too long.

A special and particular look at today's young addict! Faith and the lack of it. Work, Satisfaction, Tiredness or Exhaustion. Technology, Pornography, Shopping, Food and the weight of these issues in the recovery of today's addict. Talking about invisible addictions. And about a recovery that needs - more and more - to be visible.

We want to have more space for Addicted Women, yes, but also for you, if you're Gay. Not because of an agenda, mimimi or yada-yada-yada - but because of the truth. Simply because Addiction doesn't choose Sexes, Races, Creeds, Religions. Because the body of the Woman in Recovery - these bodies in general - carries stories that have not yet been told. Because shares like Carla's and Felisbela's

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show that Shame, Desire, Guilt and Silence are often still too feminine. But they show us, above all, the transformative and inspiring Courage and Strength of these Women!!

But this editorial is far from being a gender manifesto. This magazine doesn't intend to get political, and anything that borders on "mimimi" is subject to the rubric Mocking The Recovering!

And that's where Zé Caldinho (Joe Fix) and Maria dos Passos (Stepping Mary) also come in. They haven't come to judge, not at all!!! They've come to point out, with grace, what it can be hard to swallow without salt and seasoning. After all, laughing at ourselves can often be the first step towards not making the same old mistakes. Or maybe not....!

No!

It is a commitment to the person.

With people, with history and with memory.

With reality.

Serenidade doesn't speak only to women, nor only to men.

We speak to those who feel.

For those who have survived and survive addiction on a daily basis. For those who thought they didn't deserve anything more... and yet they stayed.

That's what we're proposing in this new phase of the Serenidade.

Not just to recover a magazine, but to recover a space. A space for listening, for identification, for memory, for humor, for depth, for denunciation and also for support.

With Humanity.

With the best and the worst that we bring inside.

This is our invitation.

For you to continue with us.

For you to take part.

We don't want to replace NA literature.

That is our basis, our structure. We want to be another space for communication from Addicts to Addicts.

Informal.

We want to know what you feel, what you see.

We want to know what you amplify inside you.

We want to discuss emotions, conflicts and dilemmas.

What does it mean to be an adita woman?

What does it mean to be a male addict?

What is it like to live Recovery today, at 20, at 40, at 60, at 70?

And above all: how did you get here? And why did you stay?

The only non-negotiable Golden Rule is unbreakable respect for the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

The rest?

It's YOUR space.

Today we choose to be Present.

Present With You and For You.

Present to be a place where your voice echoes.

Present to be a place where we connect North and South, East and West, and where we unite NA Portugal with NA World!

Let's remember:

We are all on the path.

Some on our knees, some on our feet, some zigzagging.

But together.

We just can't stop!

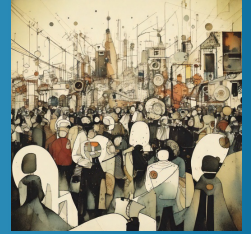
Because as we all know, "Together we can do it..."

We're back.

And this time, to stay.

We're counting on you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT



The first time I heard about the Serenidade was in my base group. It had to be!

One of those members who welcomed me from day one - those who teach much more by example than by words - showed up at the meeting with a pile of old magazines.

I leafed through those pages with the fascination of someone who finds a hidden treasure.

How could a service of such strength and power have been discontinued? A service so well done, so well written?

I asked, I investigated. I was given logical, bureaucratic and even historical explanations. But deep down I couldn't accept it. It can't be that complicated, I thought.

Or maybe it is. It could also be simple... as long as the focus is where?

Exactly where. On the SOLUTION!

Then I met Paulo!

And Paulo had the same questions.

The same concerns.

After all, it was from the meeting of two addicts that this brotherhood was born 70 years ago.

It was from the meeting of two addicts that each group was born.

It was from the meeting of two aditos that Serenidade was born.

And it is from a new meeting of recovering addicts that Serenity 2.0 is reborn! I'm glad I didn't resign myself.

I'm glad I kept my focus on the solution

I'm glad I was in recovery. I'm glad I was doing service, because neither of these two, nor any of the previous two, have done or undertaken anything without the support of a Fellowship!!

There is no right formula for selfless giving in Service. Is there?

Any movement, large or small, public or private, individual or collective, manifest or in prayer - that can add, benefit and contribute to passing on the message to the Adito who is still suffering always has the greatest value and not only can it save lives!!!

This is sincerely our conviction. What we're getting at is a simple conclusion: we couldn't start this new phase of Serenidade without praising the legacy left to us by its founders.

More than a service, more than the message passed on in each of the previous editions, we really want, and in a very sincere and heartfelt way, to highlight the competence of the work they have done.

A job that we consider to be of unparalleled quality and - it should also be remembered - under very different conditions to those that exist today. With other difficulties, with other logistics, in another time. In other words, it demanded of these people an availability of time that was quite different from what is required of us today.

I'm not belittling what awaits us and what lies ahead. Basically, and with all humility and good will, at Serenidade 2.0 we want to try to continue a work that was started and carried out for several years, and even 13 years ago, by our fellows.

Discussing or questioning the reasons for the termination doesn't matter much now (not least because it has ceased to be a termination and has become an interregnum (more or less).

What is certain is that history is always moving forward and, as we look ahead, we know that, just as in other times, surprises await us, difficulties await us and, of course, great stories await us.

Inspiring stories and testimonies.

Of Transformation, Faith and Recovery.

The purpose of this text is simply not to let pass unnoticed what has been the contribution of Serenidade to yet another form of Communication from Addicts to Addicts, with an accessible language, in a playful and innovative way in a reality that is very different from the current one!

To our brothers, our sincere CONGRATULATIONS and an ENORMOUS THANK YOU!



XXXI CPNA -40 YEARS OF NA IN PORTUGAL

A year ago, I realized the dream I'd had for some time of going to a convention in London. My curiosity came from the many times I'd seen the convention programs, the size of the space, the number of people, and all the dynamics I'd seen in photos and heard about. I went with my two best friends in recovery, and it was perhaps the trip of a lifetime. When we returned to Portugal, we came away with a new vision of gratitude and of what could still be done in NA in Portugal.

I remember going for a coffee with my father, the current convention chair, and going over every detail of what we experienced, and him talking about a similar experience at a world convention 20 years ago. That was the day I challenged him: "NA will be 40 years old next year. What if we celebrated this date and held a convention?"

At the time, it seemed more like a one-day conversation over ideas and opinions. In fact, it was different. We started to discuss it with various people, to the point that the first version of the program was in May 2024!

This convention came from the desire to do something different, with people who didn't normally work at conventions, with different topics, with the idea that the best way to disagree and want to see something new is to roll up your sleeves and get to work. Throughout the process, we came to some very interesting conclusions. One of them was that it's impossible to celebrate NA's history without those who have always been part of it. There's nothing different about the story that's already been written.

Another interesting conclusion was around the principle of representativeness: it's really that if our efforts when building a program were around the majority of the common adherent, and if the sharers were designed to have as many identifications as possible, the magic of NA's diversity would be lost.

What really completes us and makes us stronger is outlined in the third tradition

We all benefit from having servers and sharers from different generations, backgrounds, genders, personalities, ways of living the program, religions, histories and life choices.

I'm only part of just over 25% of NA's history in Portugal. Without all the help from members with more time, this convention wouldn't be possible.

It was also suggested that I talk about the difficulties in this "sharing" and there is one that cannot be avoided. First of all, congratulations to everyone who has ever been serving as chair (or co-chair) for an NA event program!!!

The fact is that most of us, after a while, can easily comment on a program and say what we would do differently.

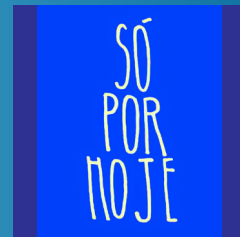
Many of us probably won't "get up from the coffee chair". There's a lot of courage and empathy behind this.

It's not at all easy to belong to the subcommittee that receives the most suggestions far removed from what is decided in group conscience.

There are many spiritual principles in the service process. Simplicity, creativity, integrity, responsibility, unity...

Service makes us give up old ideas about our actions in order to be part of a greater purpose.





ONE DAY AT A TIME JUST FOR TODAY

Serenidade - Hello, Celestino, first of all, thank you for accepting this invitation. Shall we start with a little introduction?

Celestino - My name is Celestino, I'm 61 years old and I'll be two years into recovery on March 10th.

Serenidade - Tell us a bit about your life before you joined Narcotics Anonymous.

Celestino - I got into recovery very late. When I was 40, I tried it for the first time, thank you, because I thought I was going to die from it. The times I tried, I wasn't serious and I kept the things I used. I never believed it was possible. Today, I do, but I thought I was going to die. It's been a complicated life.

Today I live on consequences, yesterday I was in the pool for five minutes and today I am so tired I can't cope. It's been 30 years of hard drugs. Ever since I got married.

Serenidade - How did you find out about NA?

Celestino - I did a self-help treatment in Óbidos and the coordinator was from Gaia. I was there for 22 months. I gained a lot of friends and, on the last day, the coordinator told me that I wouldn't be able to work, I wouldn't be able to do anything and the best thing was to have NA meetings, because he had already done it and it was going to be good for me. I couldn't find the meetings, but I did. It's just that I'd arrive too early and find my nose in the door. Then I was lucky enough to find it and I never let go. What made me cling to the meetings was my spiritual awakening. I clung to life and never let go.

Over time, I got to know people, the opposite sex, made lots of friends and friends too. But when I relapsed, I almost didn't want to go back, I was ashamed, but there were people who told me to go back and I did.

Serenidade - And now that you're here, how do you feel?

Celestino - I feel free. I feel happy. When there are meetings, it's a different day. Knowing that I'm going to an NA meeting means everything to me. I feel safe, I feel protected.

You know I have to live with active addicts and I see what I no longer want for myself, what I did in the past. They remind me of what I've been through.

Serenidade - Just for today, what are your dreams??

Celestino - I'll tell you the truth: I don't have big dreams, because my life isn't going to be very long. I have very serious health problems and I'm noticing that things are getting worse day by day.

It's one day at a time, just for today. It's no longer time to daydream. One of my goals is to receive the 24-month key ring, and the rest will follow. I have many consequences: I lost the people I loved most in my life, my children, my ex-wife - I loved her very much - I went to jail, I was abandoned and despised.

You don't forget these things. I was in prison for five years for drug dealing, I was on the street, I starved, I didn't bathe. I can't forget this and it helps me to stay on this side.

Serenidade - If you had to say something to a newcomer to convince them to stay, what would you say?

Celestino - I'd tell him to do what I did: stick to service, get yourself to go to meetings, especially when you don't feel like going, and then things will work out, as they did for me.

Carla



From "Worryships" to Relationships of an Addicted Woman

"I'm a woman.

An addict.

A woman who often shares what others, or other women, want to hear. What is 'beautiful' to say as a woman."

But the truth isn't pretty.

"The truth is that I used drugs.

I used my body to use drugs

I've had attitudes and behaviors that I don't like, and for a long time I felt ashamed to say so.

I felt ashamed to let other women know."

Carla is not alone.

How many addicted women live this story?

How many learned, from an early age, that their value depends on being accepted, desired, molded to the tastes of others?

Addiction taught her something brutal:

"Pain is also an addiction.

I could be addicted to pain.

Addicted to nostalgia.

Addicted to angst.

Addicted to low self-esteem."

It was as if suffering was the only possible way to exist.

A Past that shapes a Present"Fortunately or unfortunately, the relationships I sought out are perhaps a mirror of my experiences as a teenager."

The past built Carla's foundations.

Her first male role model? An absent father, an alcoholic man. A man who disappeared.

"Throughout my childhood, he was absent. Throughout my adolescence, he was too permissive.

Either because he was in detox clinics, or because, as he got older, Parkinson's robbed him of what was left of his already weak communication with me." And what does a girl do when she doesn't feel protected? She looks for it in "convenience".

She looks for it in the "comfort of discomfort".

She looks for it in the "wrong" places

"And so, in my relationships, I always ended up looking for that figure.

And I often wanted relationships in an immature way, where I didn't respect myself as a person. Where I became submissive, not to please myself, but so as not to lose the other person."

The fear of rejection thus became the biggest ghost in Carla's life.

"If I said 'No', if I imposed a limit, if I stopped pleasing... I would lose that person forever. I would lose that person forever."

The logic of Addiction replicated itself and multiplied in her emotional life.

"I caused conflicts.

I emotionally self-harmed.

I sabotaged relationships.

And then I suffered!

Because I always placed myself as an Object

Object of pleasure.

Object of war.Object of conflict.

Object of jealousy.

Object of everything that wasn't positive."

Carla's life became a repetition of destructive patterns. And when Suffering is all you know...what does it mean to be Happy anyway?

The "Change of Chip": Forgiveness and a New Consciousness

An answer that came when something unexpected happened.

"One day I realized that my father had the same problem as me."

And something definitely changed inside Carla ..."

He did and gave what he could give, how he could give it.

He also had his difficulties.

And, one day, I managed to forgive him."

Forgiving her father was the first step towards forgiving herself.

Carla

From "Worryships" to Relationships of an Addicted Woman

"I realized that, before I could have healthy relationships, I needed to relate well to myself. I needed to learn to like myself."

Like everything unknown, self-concept, self-love and self-knowledge in general can be scary adventures.

"The journey involves gradually considering and accepting that I'm a woman who has trouble liking myself.

Because I have to find out for myself.
For me!

Asking my Higher Power to remove these behaviors of mine, these thoughts of mine, these obsessions of mine, these attitudes of mine of wanting to stay in relationships in which I am rejected and in which I am constantly in Pain."

But apparently they are well worth exploring, as Carla's emptiness gradually began to take on a completely different shape:

"If in the past it used to bring me a lot of pain, nowadays Emptiness is starting to bring me Peace. It's being okay with myself... THAT'S SO GOOD."

A Silent Revolution

"I'm very afraid of rejection.

I'm very afraid of abandonment.

But today, I no longer justify my behavior by begging someone to stay with me just so I don't feel alone."

And here is where the Revolution kicks off.

That's where the Woman who finds herself again arrives.

"Look, I like you.

Look, you're beautiful!

Look, you're worthy!

Look, you don't need to get laid just to be accepted!"

The shock of hearing these and other phrases like them was so strong that it felt like they were speaking a language I didn't understand!!!

"Because this is a Program of Change."

And it's in the small details that Change begins to take shape:

The way in which, for the first time, the "Nothing is

wrong" mode became a state of Peace and not of Fear. The way you began to remove stones from the path instead of accumulating them.

The way she learned not to accept less than she deserves.

Today, Carla knows something she didn't know before: "I want this path! Although it may have many stones, I can remove them instead of adding more and complicating my journey! Today I can remove them and make my life lighter. So much so that if nothing happens in my life... it's FANTASTIC!!! In "NOTHING'S WRONG" mode: I'm fine with myself."

And the journey continues

Carla realized that Recovery is not a Destination. It's a path!

Every day, she fights against old patterns. She fights against deep-rooted fears.

She fights against a story that society has told her about what it means to be a woman.

The difference is that now, today, and JUST FOR TODAY - Carla knows she has a Choice.

Today she chooses to laugh.

She chooses to cry.

She chooses to say Yes, No or Maybe!

She chooses to accept and embrace the reflection that the mirror gives her.

"Nowadays I'm no longer ashamed. Because I know that when I become aware that I have these character defects, I know that if I look them in the face; I'm absolutely sure that I'll become a woman who likes to be loved!!! "

Today Carla knows and respects herself as an evolving human being, a woman in transformation and an addict in recovery!

"I exist as a person.

I exist as a woman who respects herself, and I believe that this is perhaps my greatest triumph."

Pedro F.



We keep what we have thanks to vigilance!

A step towards serenity

Serenity, perhaps that's what attracts me most to this program, obviously and equally adjusted to the time I have to live, half of it and thankfully, spent in recovery doesn't mean (for me) a state of zen or levitation, but rather a state in which I can have a sense of what has been, what I need to enjoy today and faith (with patience) in what will come!

Today I'm Pedro, an recovering addict for 26 years, and I'm going to try to describe/share what my process/path has been like over the last few years, as it has undoubtedly made a difference.

It's been such a blessed adventure, even with all the adversities I've encountered, and there are quite a few, over the days, weeks, moments and years.

After a period of 24 hours, I came across a moment that brought me back to the rooms, to sharing, to (great) friends, to the sponsor, to service, to real life and recovery, which became simpler one day at a time.

After being away from these same rooms, meetings, friends and service for reasons that for me were more than justified, I developed my business and professional life, practiced a sport that I thought I would never be able to do, the family united with me, where I count as one more element of it. In short, I thought I could do things on my own, with impulsive solutions and a lot of self-will, dealing with anxiety (fear as I see it) in the form of work, sport and taking control of everything!

Then, 18 years into recovery and on one of the nights I was having fun with friends, I came across a situation in which I felt very uncomfortable, an enormous desire to use, not my drug of choice, but a great desire.... Then I realized that things really weren't aligned and all the feelings I described above came to the surface, the questions, the doubts, the uncomfortable insecurity, the fear of that moment, of what I felt! Without saying goodbye or thinking about anything else, I left that space and when I woke up at home the next day, I thought about everything I had to lose for a "simple" desire to use something that could have turned into

the activation of a past, heavy, aimless nightmare! How good it was that it was nothing more than a "will" and so I started a new process, I asked my sponsor for help, I went back to the classrooms (permanently), I got involved, I recovered friends that I "never" lost, little by little I regained faith, I believed that I could be more and that I was capable, I worked on steps, I got involved in service and one day at a time I actively recovered (action program) my so good recovery. It may seem like a contradiction in terms, but for me, surrendering means one of the greatest actions I've learned to take, better understanding what "good will" means and how it differs from the "willpower" that for years and years I felt was my greatest strength for living.

I think differently, just for today, goodwill (when I practice it) allows me the serenity to accept things as they are, the courage and faith to move forward, calmly and with action towards my goals.

After this new period, as an example, I experienced one of the strongest and most negative emotions I could feel: loss! The loss of one of the people who has always been by my side throughout this process, thankfully also in his time of need. My father! I feel that I made the most of my time with him and the rest of the family, but the aim of this sharing is to pass on the experience, which was one of the worst moments I've had in recovery, but which I coped with better because I was involved, with friends, rooms, services that stayed by my side, it was brutal what I felt!

Yes, I'm one of those who says, if I hadn't used it, I wouldn't have known this program with its fantastic people, I wouldn't have known this program that one day at a time saves me and so many others, developing a real sense of belonging! Adversities continue to arise and with them the insecurities of not succeeding, the fear... But when, with faith and a lot (really a lot) of sharing and help, I free myself and move forward in Faith, in Love, in Life! In search of serenity, while remaining vigilant!

Thank you for the opportunity to share.
+24h serene.



FROM LOOSE SOIL TO FIRM GROUND

That Secret at 11

"Hi, I'm Felisbela and I'm a recovering addict."

This is how Felisbela begins her sharing.

A sharing in which she tells us about an old Secret, carried with her since she was a little girl.

Felisbela didn't start using because she wanted to escape.

In fact, she used because, at the age of 11, she finally felt free.

"Very early on, in the form of a joke, I had my first contact with substances. I was 11. I liked it! I liked the effect. It uninhibited me. It was a feeling of freedom that I liked. Something remained there as if it were... My Secret."

It wasn't rebellion either.

It was relief.

It was a breath of fresh air where there seemed to be only restraint, fear and silence.

"I come from a humble, conservative, but also dysfunctional family.

I vividly remember witnessing domestic violence because everything was hushed up.

It stayed in our home. As the youngest daughter, I always had the need to defend myself.

And how did I defend myself?

I always wanted to please.

With fear.

I was afraid.

I felt ashamed, a shame that has always accompanied me.

It's still one of my characteristics today: feeling ashamed in the eyes of others."

The Rootless Girl

Felisbela's adolescence was made up of starts and starts again.

Whenever she bonded with something or someone, she soon had to leave.

There seemed to be no safe place.

Nor enough time to belong.

"I used this Secret throughout my adolescence, at times to become uninhibited, to have fun, to be part of groups.

My adolescence was a difficult time.

I never really put down roots with people, with young

people like me.

Because of my father's job, I had to move several times. As soon as I started to make friends, move to a different school, move to a different place... I had to move again.

This made me feel inadequate.

Insecure.

And then the drugs helped me.

They helped me overcome this inadequacy.

They helped me overcome that insecurity."

At that time, drugs weren't the Problem.

It was the wrong solution to a pain that no one could see.

It was the only place where it felt possible.

The Variations within us

But what made her insecure wasn't just the change, it was the constant comparison, the feeling of always being "less".

"I always compared myself.

Since I was very young, I compared myself to others and I thought they had the best families, the best clothes, the best life.

I lived a life living up to the image, adapting to others, living other people's lives, not my own.

I lived a life running away from myself."

The Fitting Role

Everything that seemed to bother her so much on the outside... was, after all, coming from the inside.

From the inside! But it was still far from being understood.

In the mind of an active Addict, the problem is always the world.

The problem is always others.

The problem is never what she truly feels in her chest.

And that's where another role comes in.

The role where, in the eyes of others, everything seemed right: family, home, work, even a certain glow of stability.

On the inside, Felisbela was still that girl who didn't know how to be or feel.

"Marriage. It came too soon. It was as if I had freed myself from the bonds of my upbringing.

As if I were freed from the control I was under.

I raised my family.

I was professionally fulfilled.

FROM LOOSE SOIL TO FIRM GROUND

I had my house. But... I always felt dissatisfied.
I didn't understand what it was to be well.
I was only well when I was under the influence.
"There are lives that seem complete, but which are actually in 'survival mode'.
On the outside, everything is impeccable.
On the inside, there's just the fatigue of 'make-believe'.

Brakeless Blasting

There are roles that save us.
And others that slowly suffocate us.
The role of a strong woman.
The role of a present mother.
The role of a capable professional.
Roles that society applauds, but that the soul can't always handle.
Until it collapses!
"It was at a time of divorce that I responded to Anger.
Frustration. Revenge.
Because I wanted revenge!
Using increasingly became more frequent. And with them... insanity.
My children, still young, witnessed many painful situations.
Ambulances at the door.
Suicide attempts.
And it got to the point where I gave up.
I made a geographic escape.
I thought that being alone and without anyone was the solution.
I let go of my children.
I gave them to their father.
And I left."

At this point, there are no morals or judgments.
Felisbela was no longer running away from Shame.
Shame lived inside her.
Because Addiction destroys without warning and without measure.
It destroys relationships.
It destroys mothers.
It destroys children.

"Two years that were my total decline.
Two years alone.
Two years of using.
Two years of destruction.

That's when the financial decline also began.
Two years in which I stole.
Two years of robbery.
Two years in which I went into debt.
I pushed my family away and did everything I could to keep them away from me.
And I was alone.
Me, alone, using.
Living to use, and using to live!"
Life was no longer happening.
It was just a cycle of repetition.
Just a cycle of repetition, where the days lost their name and the body only served to support the next high.
There was no escape.
Only falling.
Felisbela started collecting masks.
And the more masks she put on, the further she became from herself.
Until there was no longer any disguise that could withstand what was inside.

That's when she really blasted.
"I felt the despair.
I felt the suffering.
Using no longer gave me that satisfaction to disinhibit myself, that help to overcome my emotional states.
It was no longer the same satisfaction as years ago.
Suicide attempts became more frequent."

Doing everything "right"... and still getting lost

In the early days of Recovery, a lot starts to change, even if everything seems the same to us.
It's as if the cracks we've been hammering into our lives during the time we've been using them are gradually giving way to the entry of some Light.
We do what we're told, even if we don't really understand why.
"I did everything they suggested: I did meetings, I did service, and I was always present.
Present with new friends. Present with new friends.
Above all, I didn't follow what my head told me to do, but what was suggested by others.
And there began a Faith within me.
It gave me enormous confidence.
Things that I had lost many years ago, because I didn't believe in myself.

FROM LOOSE SOIL TO FIRM GROUND

I didn't trust anyone."

Felisbela plunged into recovery with everything she had.

She did as she was told. She did it. She gave herself up. And gradually, she recovered what she thought was unrecoverable.

"Naturally, things happened.

Naturally, I was able to rebuild my family's trust.

I managed to rebuild the trust of my children."

Trust began to be reborn, but with awareness comes not only trust, but also guilt:

"Although trust, my children's trust, is something that, even today, with them grown up, when something doesn't go well, the first feeling that comes over me is guilt.

I automatically think, 'They're going through this because I wasn't there for them as a mother at one point in their lives.

And the guilt comes immediately.

Because today I have tools that help me not to respond according to the guilt I feel."

Tools that help me respect myself as a woman

For a long time, my relationship with myself was marked by an inversion of priorities.

The illusion of a "warm feeling" briefly covered up the cold of an older emptiness: the one that came from within."This is because, in the last few years of active consumption, I've had relationships with men that were, yes, relationships just to get immediate pleasure... and perhaps a 'warm feeling'.

A warmth that I fantasized could perhaps be a comfort that I didn't have for the rest of my life."

But the absence was still there.

Deeper, darker, heavier.

"I didn't have that!

And I did, but I was left with an even greater emptiness.

So it was, I would say, a form of prostitution!

Prostitution not in the sense of receiving money, but in the sense of getting some immediate pleasure and that 'warm feeling', which I'm not at all proud of.

But I was very sick.

And I have to look at that."

The Old Ghost of Rejection

Some pains stick to the skin like limpets.

We can be clean, present, active in recovery, and yet

they are still there, or they come back when we least expect it.

Rejection can be one of these.

It doesn't have to be explicit. All it takes is a silence, an absence, a disappointed expectation, a frown or a misplaced word.

And what seemed past, outdated or dormant... wakes up.

Fortunately, today Felisbela is not alone in dealing with this.

She has a network.

She has a group.

She has a program.

She has tools.

And above all, she has the courage to ask for help.

"Also because I always feel that... NO, I don't know how to deal with Rejection.

I'm talking about intimate relationships, love relationships.

I have great difficulty dealing with rejection."

"I've had a few situations in Recovery where what helped me a lot was asking for help.

It was having friends and a godmother to get me through those moments.

Moments that are very difficult.

Because the first thing on my mind was to go and use in order to erase that horrible pain of rejection.

The pain of feeling humiliated.

Feeling alone again.

Feeling like I'm once again putting my whole life in someone else's hands!"

Just when I thought I knew enough...

There are times when we confuse cleaning time with enough security.

Felisbela began to drift away slowly.

And isolation crept in, in the treacherous way of addiction, masquerading as routine.

"At a time when, very much because of my profession at the time, I thought I knew a lot, that I knew enough.

I thought I knew enough about the Program, enough about being in Recovery, and... I drifted away.

I isolated myself again.

Away from Meetings.

Away from Service.

Away from People.

And I ended up in a little world between job and home"

FROM LOOSE SOIL TO FIRM GROUND

Relapse and running aground

Relapse never begins on the day of using.
It starts when we forget.
It begins when we disconnect from Principles, from People, from Service.
It starts when we go back to thinking that we can do it alone.
Often, it just feels like a "natural" withdrawal.
A break. A rest.
But for any recovering addict, this is a dangerous illusion.
The most dangerous!

Felisbela recognized, with the lucidity that only pain brings, that her withdrawal came at a price.
And a high price.
"When I was faced once again with an uncomfortable situation in the family, a health problem with my father, I was very fragile.
Spiritually fragile.
Physically fragile.
Emotionally fragile.
I tasted again a feeling I had felt in the past.
The Relapse of attitude was in place.
Getting to the substances was too fast.
Relapse ensued.
I relapsed.
Immediately.
And it was frightening.
I felt losing the ground under my feet again and I was at a loss."

The return to Unconditional Love

Relapse didn't destroy everything.
It destroyed the illusion of self-sufficiency, but it couldn't erase what Felisbela had experienced before: a sense of belonging, love, support, freedom of choice.
So when she crashed, she knew where to go.
And she came back.
What she found wasn't judgment, it was Love.
One of the greatest certainties that NA gives to those who arrive or return, and one that attracted Felisbela the most, is that no one is judged or questioned for failing while trying.

"And I asked for help.

Narcotics Anonymous opened some doors for me.

In fact, they never closed.

I was the one who closed them.

And there again I had open arms, full of Love to give me. And I came back.

And if it hadn't been for these people, if it hadn't been for this help, if it hadn't been for this love in Narcotics Anonymous, I wouldn't have stayed here.

Because the desire to disappear and destroy my life came back.

And it was Love that saved me.

Love is Narcotics Anonymous."

The Power of Illness and Commitment to Life

When the disease shows us its brutal force - not as a threat - but as a reality, it only takes a few moments for everything to collapse.

Today Felisbela reinforces that she doesn't want to forget that.

Not out of fear, but out of humility:

"I saw how powerful this illness is.

I felt how destructive this disease is.

Within hours, I found myself in the mud again."

"And, I don't forget - I don't forget, and I don't want to forget so I don't go back there - that doing service, having meetings, being with my new friends again, and often; they make me believe in myself every day.

They make me believe that it's Possible.

They keep me in Recovery.

Whatever may happen."

As a Woman. As a Mother. As a Friend.

Pain hasn't stopped appearing.

But today, Felisbela lives it differently.

She no longer avoids it, no longer numbs herself to it, no longer gives in to despair.

Today, she lives it with Courage.

With the Program. With the spirituality and faith she has (re)discovered!

And this ability to face it without running away is what makes her a whole woman.

Not perfect.

But present.

FROM LOOSE SOIL TO FIRM GROUND

"And in the meantime,
painful situations have happened.

Situations that I have lived through.
I didn't run away from feeling them and living them
looking at the Solution and not the Problem.
With my head held high, I carried on.
As a woman.
As a mother.
As a daughter.
As a grandmother.
As a friend and, above all, as a friend to myself."

Liking myself as I am

One of Recovery's greatest transformations is
undoubtedly self-awareness.
Recognizing who you are and what you're like, but still
choosing to welcome that Being.
Today, Felisbela doesn't need to hide or prove herself
to anyone.
She doesn't need to mold herself or ask permission.
She just needs to be.
"To like myself.
I've learned to like myself with my faults and with my
virtues, just the way I am, because I believe, and I have
the experience of it, that every day I become a better
person."
"Having the ability to look at myself.
The ability to look at my mistakes because I don't do
everything right, because I'm not perfect.
I don't want to be perfect, I am what I am.
I'm Felisbela, I have a disease called addiction and,
above all, I'm a unique being who has to live, know how
to live and learn to live with this disease."

Felisbela thanks you. And so do we

What Felisbela offers us here is not just another share.

It's a living testimony that pain can be transformed.
That there is a place where no one needs to pretend
anymore and that, after any fall, it is ALWAYS possible
to come back and RECOVER.

With truth. With honesty.

And, above all, with Love!

"Thank you for being there.
Thank you to Narcotics Anonymous.

Beyond a Program and beyond a New Way of Life, it's a
group of people who save my life every day.

Thank you and +24."



AROUND **HERE** & ABOUT **THERE**



XXXI CPNA
40 YEARS OF NA IN PORTUGAL
PORTIMÃO, PORTUGAL
04-06.04.2025

<https://xxxicpna.na-pt.org/>



XXXX CRENA
NA, un ABANICO de posibilidades
CÁDIZ, SPAIN
25-27.04.2025

<https://www.narcoticosanonimos.es>



XV CNALX
PÉS NA AREIA
TORRES VEDRAS, PORTUGAL
14-15.06.2025

<https://xvcnalx.na-pt.org>



EUROPEAN LEARNING DAYS
BERLIN, GERMANY
25-27.04.2025

<https://edmna.org/esld6/>

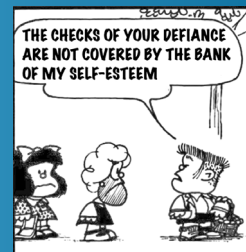


ECCNA40
CELEBRATE LIFE
ROTTERDAM,
NETHELANDS
18-20.06.2025

<https://eccna.nl/>
<https://edmna.org/eccna/>

The 40th European Convention (ECCNA) is coming to Rotterdam on July 18-20, 2025! It will be an unforgettable event, full of sharing, connection, celebration of life and recovery.

And there's more: it will be streamed and translated into Portuguese, with the support of our Translations Subcommittee.



MOCKING THE RECOVERING

JOE FIX



INVENTORIES À LA CARTE

SO I HEAR....

Celestino, you've made it to two years! Goal achieved!

– Paulo O.

Glad to have you back, Serenidade. I'm waiting for the hero Zé Caldinho (Joe Fix). Priceless!

– Luís T.

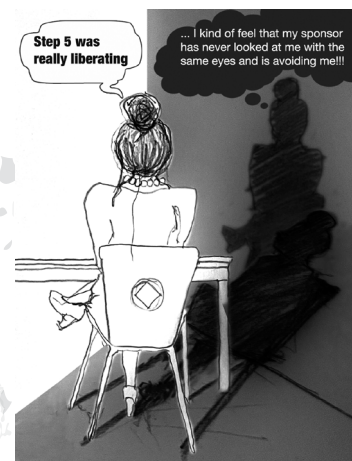
Give them my number!!!

– Author unknown.



The usual gang of addicts

STEPPING MARY



Do you want to be on the cover of the next magazine?

Send in a drawing or photo related to recovery (not including people).

The chosen artwork will be on the cover of the next magazine.

CELEBRATION



Date	Meeting	Day	Location
06/04/2023	Liberdade Em Recuperação	Thursday	Lisboa
10/04/2010	Gare Na Planície	Saturday	Évora
16/04/1998	Doenças Em Recuperação	Thursday	Foco - Porto
18/04/1999	Oliveira, Reflexões À Maneira	Friday	Olveira do Douro Gaia
19/04/2019	Santa Recuperação	Friday	Torres Vedras
04/05/2024	Miracles In Porto	Friday	Porto
04/05/2024	Luanda Só Por Hoje	Saturday	Luanda
11/05/2018	Lobas Em Recuperação	Wednesday	Parede
25/05/1996	Isto É Grupo	Tuesday	Massamá
26/05/2018	Renascer Em Moscavide	Friday	Moscavide
29/05/2000	Arriscar	Monday	Porto
30/05/2023	Clean In Lisbon	Tuesday	Lisboa
01/06/2007	Recuperação d'Ouro	Thursday	Vila Real
01/06/2023	Recuperar Com Responsabilidade	Thursday	Setúbal
12/06/2010	Crescer Em Recuperação	Monday	Ponta Delgada
13/06/2014	Jovens Em Recuperação	Friday	Lisboa
15/06/1990	NA Linha	Tuesday	Paço De Arcos
16/06/2008	Só Por Hoje Em Carnide	Monday	Carnide
16/06/2018	Ponto De Encontro	Saturday	Almada
18/06/1993	Arco-Íris	Friday	Amora
20/06/1992	Os Magníficos	Monday	Leiria
26/06/2018	O Caminho	Tuesday	Vila do Conde

If you want to see your group's anniversary, or that of your fellow members, contact us.

LAST SHARE

Serenidade 2.0 magazine is published in Portuguese and English and is available in digital format.

Its contents are a way of contributing to the recovery of NA members by publishing information on recovery, activities and services related to recovery.

The magazine also seeks to introduce a component of entertainment and debate on issues relevant to its recipients.

All NA members can and should suggest topics to be covered, simply by contacting us by e-mail.

The magazine is also open to other forms of collaboration from NA members. All contributions are welcome.

The coordinators reserve the right to evaluate the conformity of texts and other contributions with the 12 traditions of NA.

All material must be original and, once published, is the property of the journal, implying permission to publish.

The articles published represent the experience and opinion of individual NA members and do not necessarily express the principles and philosophy of NA as a whole.

YOUR SERENE TEAM

CHAIR: Paulo O.

CO-CHAIR: Diana C.

Collaborators: José S., Susana R., Teresa

... and all the fellows that would like to participate!



CONTACT

serenidade@na-pt.org