



NACONNECTIONS

HAMILTON AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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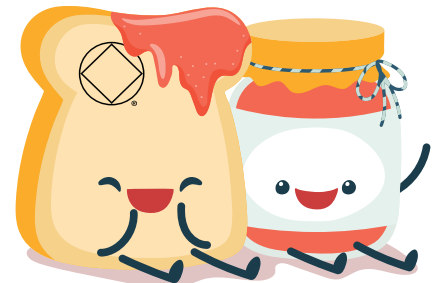
WELCOME TO CONNECTIONS!

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RECOVERY IS MY JAM!



DID YOU KNOW?

Narcotics Anonymous holds more than 70,000 weekly meetings in 144 countries around the globe?

**Source: NA Membership Survey 2018*





COMMONALITY

WRITTEN BY TYLER S.

Looking for common identity
Seeking a dose of insanity
Finding a shared intensity
Dying in my own humanity

Spirits of the irrational
Gathering around a circle
Communion of a sickness
Unconditional surrender

Melting of the snow
Gun out of my mouth
Head on your shoulder
Rebirthing of our souls

The sun will set
Blanket of isolation
Beautiful Whispers
Temptation of a devil

Abstinence in question
Fog has fallen
The path back from Hell
Bitter familiarity

Conception of a dream
Reunion of angels
Promises of the broken
Chaotic peace

EXPERIENCE

BY JOANNE K.

I have found that “willingness” is one of the biggest keys to recovery, along with honesty and open-mindedness. You have to be willing to change, not just willing to quit using. For me, it was to give up drugs and alcohol. Alcohol is a drug. Any substance can become a drug and take over my mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well being and get in the way of my day-to-day living and prevent me from being the person my God would have me be today.

I can remember being on my computer in early recovery, being resentful that someone would dare to call **me** and interrupt **me** when I was posting. Don't they know I am busy. Don't they know what I was doing was important. I was all caught up in the **I, myself** and **me** of my disease, into the Self and I had to turn

my thinking and my attitude over to my Higher Power. It was I who was doing service don't you know, and I became **self-righteous** and **full of self** instead of being God-centered.

I am but a channel and a messenger that carries my own experience, strength, and hope. I am not the idol and the example of what recovery is, although I try to live and walk my talk. It is progress not perfection. I can share how the program worked for me and how I applied it to my life, But that doesn't mean it will work for someone else. They may have to do things differently. For me it was life or death. To use was to die. I had no option. Even though I have stayed clean for 20+ years, I still have no option. It is still do or die. Just for today, I choose not to use. **I choose to live.**

RECOVERY
MAYA ANGELOU



A last love,
Proper in conclusion,
Should snip the wings
Forbidding further flight.

But I, now,
reft of that confusion,
Am lifted up
And speeding toward the light.



Recovery & Covid-19:

One Addict's reflection of personal recovery before and during Covid-19

Meetings:

"I don't feel like going," "I am too tired," "It's too cold out," "It's too hot out," "The baby kept me up all night," "It was a long day at work," "I have to do school work and study." These are the phrases I have found myself too often saying to justify and rationalize not attending a meeting.

Meetings (Covid-19):

I have taken meetings for granted; the hugs, making coffee, setting up, tearing down, welcoming the newcomer and the overall spiritual nature of meetings. I realized that meetings are a privilege that I have taken for granted, I assumed there would always be in person meetings and by doing so I stopped valuing the experience of our predecessors and what it took to have Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Although in isolation, the fellowship of NA is reminding me that I am not alone. We are a part of a worldwide fellowship. WE are in this together.

Currently there are meetings 24/7 and I get the privilege to get the experience, strength and hope from meetings worldwide. I am inspired by the unity and inclusivity and amazed at all the conventions, speaker jams and medallion celebrations occurring online. I am reminded that the disease of addiction doesn't go away; it requires daily maintenance - no matter what is happening. I am reminded of our primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, I need to be sitting in that chair. OUR common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA UNITY.

Service:

When I started coming to NA, I was taught the importance of doing service and I have remained doing service ever since. It is a privilege to me to be able to do service, after all, before recovery I wasn't trusted or responsible for anything. Staying clean provided me with the opportunity to do service and there is a lot of gratitude there for me.

Service (Covid-19):

It is clear to me, more than ever, that there are a lot of addicts that do not know NA exists. I think about the newcomer who would be attending their first meeting but cannot during this time. So I ask myself: How can I help getting the message out into the community? How can we carry the message to those that do not have access to a computer, phone or internet? How can we get the Basic Text into their hands? This again reminds me that I am privileged to have our literature and easy access to meetings. I am so grateful, and it lights a fire within me to be of service.

Step Work:

I believe that we get out of recovery what we put in. Narcotics Anonymous is a 12-step program, so what did I do when I was newly in recovery? I did the 12 steps, and the freedom from active addiction that they talk about in our literature happened for me. I once heard "Do the work, get the results; Don't do the work, don't get the results", and this has never left me.

Step Work (Covid-19):

I am currently doing a step study, and this has become one of the most important tools for me during this time. It is helping me keep the principles and literature at the forefront and to try and be in the solution more than the problem. What could I do if there was not a step study? I could ask my sponsor to take me through the steps again, or I could see if there was any interest of holding a step study. One way or the other, I need to do the work.

Connection with Higher Power:

Honestly, my efforts to connect had not been consistent and I may have dozed off while praying, sometimes before bed, or I would wake up in the morning, realize I forgot to pray, make an excuse for myself and make a commitment to make time to do it later - but not always following through.

Connection with Higher Power (Covid-19):

I have been making conscious decisions to connect more. I am making time and not rushing through this time of connection. I am trying different spiritual activities to explore what works best for me. Most importantly I am putting in effort for the relationship to grow and strengthen a connection.

Sponsorship:

Our literature states, "Sponsorship is the heartbeat of NA", and I strongly believe this. I have never been without a sponsor and I have always put in effort to call them. I do not let a lot of time go past without contacting my sponsor.

Sponsorship (Covid-19):

I regularly call my sponsor and I get honest about any and everything and she shares her experience, strength and hope. When I completed the 12-steps I was provided with the gift of being a sponsor. Being a sponsor helps me stay clean (work the 12th step) and helps me continue to grow. Sponsorship reminds me that I do not need to live in isolation, that I am not alone, that I am a part of, and most importantly, that sponsorship provides guidance through the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous. I have always been interested in the history of Narcotics Anonymous and through my reflections I feel that I have been guided to take some time to look into our history more and learn about our predecessors. I am reminded how our predecessors lead the way for us, and while we are processing and going through the pandemic of Covid-19 we are going to be the predecessors leading the way for those yet to come.



WORD SCRAMBLE
SUBMITTED BY BETHANY L.

Word Scramble

spiritual principles

htneosy

ertgituda

srrreuden

uoarcge

opmistim

pvrseraeence

pessontibilyir

nccepcaate

caeipnte

eoph

turst

niwlilgness

ewaransse

carngi

eervisc

vorfiengess

iafth

comoss pian

hmiiluty

vtgalini

sinknesd



Recovery Definitions:

AVOIDABLE (uh-voy'-duh-buhl'): What a bullfighter tries to do.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation

GOSSIP: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage

PARADOX (par'-u-doks'): Two physicians.

SELFISH: What the owner of a seafood store does.

VUJA DE: The Feeling You've Never Been Here

#lmas



HUNGRY

HALT SOLUTIONS

MACARONI & CHEESE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups dry elbow macaroni or small shells
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 cups milk not skim
- 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 2 cups of shredded cheese (sharp)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Bring a pot of water to a boil; add a generous sprinkling of salt to the pasta.
- While the pasta cooks, melt the butter in a skillet or pot large enough to hold the pasta when it's done.
- Add the flour and stir over medium heat until the mixture is lightly browned; 1-2 minutes.
- Add the milk and whisk to remove any lumps and add the salt and pepper.
- Cook over medium-high heat until the sauce thickens and starts to bubble (about 6 minutes)
- Stir in the cheese and whisk until smooth and melted. Turn off the heat.
- When the pasta is almost done but still firm, drain it and add to the sauce.
- Stir the pasta into the sauce and bake in a greased 2 quart dish (or an 8x8 pan works pretty well) for 20-25 minutes until browned and bubbly. You can also skip baking it if you want it super creamy and just put it under the broiler to brown the top (keep an eye on it) and then serve.

YUMMY ADD-ON IDEAS

- Extra cheese (on top)
- Bacon (bits)
- Asparagus
- Peppers (hot or flakes)

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

The thinner the dish, the less the bake time. For example:
 Cast iron skillet - 25 min
 Casserole Dish - 40 min

To make ahead, cool the pasta and cheese sauce once they have been mixed together, cover with plastic wrap and chill until ready to bake (up to two days). Bake until hot in the center and bubbling around the edges.



Broom-Hilda is an American newspaper comic strip created by cartoonist Russell Myers ©2018



ANGRY

There are a lot of things to be angry about these days. With the threat of a global pandemic, we are limited to what we can and can't do, socially. And even the things we are allowed to do have stipulations. There are people actively going against the recommendations of society and it's hard to tell what news is based in reality. Speculations, fear, and opinions are flying wildly. Any one of these factors can make us extremely angry.

Part of recovery is realizing the things that we can change, and also having the capacity to accept the things that we can't change. As we embark on recovery, we have the opportunity to embrace anger and use it to show us the values that we care about. Before I entered recovery, I thought that anger was something to be avoided at all costs. Now I have come to realize that the opposite of anger isn't happiness. The opposite of anger is indifference.

Today I choose to use anger as a guide. I will allow it to take me by the hand and to show me things that matter to me the most.

LONELY

One member that has more than 20 years of clean time told me that this has been the most trying year of her recovery. In active addiction, isolation just went with the territory. We felt locked away from our families, not able to share this main part of our lives with them, in fear of being turned away and isolated even further. Now we are being encouraged, and in some places forced to self-isolate. Without physical interaction, it is difficult to grow. Humans are social creatures, after-all, and we strive in groups. When we are together we can see the nuances in each other's expressions and hold each other accountable.

Luckily, there are online meetings, but not everybody has access to the internet, especially those who may need it the most. It is essential that we think outside the box in order to continue to spread the message of hope and recovery.

Today I choose to use loneliness as a guide to show me the people in my life that matter the most. It teaches me not to take those human interaction for granted.

TIRED

I am tired today. I'm tired of being angry. I'm tired of feeling lonely. I'm tired of being told what I can do and when, and how to do it. I'm tired of not being able to see my family. I'm tired of not being able to go to meetings. I'm tired of feeling like I have no purpose in life.

I wake up and eat and clean up and go to bed again, seemingly on repeat. The days and weeks are starting to feel like months and I'm tired of feeling tired all the time. It's starting to feel like active addiction all over again. There are so many things that I want to do, but they aren't possible. This is the easiest time to return to active addiction, because boredom, isolation, and addiction are a perfect storm. Even the best recovery can falter if we don't stay vigilant and keep doing the things that are keeping us clean; reading, talking, sharing, feeling.

Today, I choose to use tiredness as a guide to remind me of the things I miss doing the most. I will remember that sometimes purpose can be found in offering a hand or an ear to someone I care about.



HALT SOLUTIONS
continued



PARENTING DURING COVID-19

WRITTEN BY KEVIN D.

Parenting during Covid – 19 compared to parenting before is like night and day. As someone who was working full time and now has been off due to the pandemic, it's almost overwhelming sometimes the responsibility that comes with being home all the time. I have been blessed enough that my son sleeps during the night and I am amazed at what my wife has been able to do. Honestly, I am wiped by the end of the day.

At work I was working overnights regularly and I was tired, but I am so tired at the end of the night that my wife wants to spend time together and I'm falling asleep before 10:30pm. I didn't realize how much work goes into parenting and being at home all the time with my son. My wife has been on maternity leave. I think about all the nights she texted me every few hours when I was at work, feeding our son and taking care of him, thinking "Wow, I don't know if I could do that!" I've been getting frustrated trying to keep up, feeling I am doing so much when I would sleep during the day and work at night, before covid. No wonder I feel like it's so much.

Our son is teething right now. Some days he is just miserable, but boy do I love him. There are days I should be reading him books and feeding him more solid food and playing with him on the floor, but I'm so exhausted, and feel like I can't keep up. There are mornings where I get up before 7AM and my son wants to play, but he cries because he's so sleepy. There are times when I am trying to get him down for a nap, but he's crying so hard because he's so overtired and inconsolable. There are times my wife and I are attending online meetings and our son is tired; screaming and climbing all over us to get to the computer. It's difficult to focus.

It's times like these that parenting can be difficult, especially in recovery. These are things that I didn't do before covid, because I was either working or sleeping all the time. My wife is a Rockstar, and my son is the best. I love my family so much.

If I set aside the things I have mentioned, I can say it is all worth it because I have the best family in the world. It's been a struggle at times, and times have been tough in this world with this social distancing and isolation, it has given me a couple of the greatest gifts: More time with my family, and the opportunity to recommit to my recovery.

RECOVERY JOKES

a laughing matter

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He descended a bit and shouted to a man on the ground. "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man on the ground replied, "You're in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You're between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degree west longitude."

"You must be a sponsor," said the balloonist.

"I am," replied the man, "how did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is, I believe, technically correct, but I've no idea what to make of your information and fact is, I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help at all. If anything, you've probably delayed my trip."

The man below responded, "You must be a sponsee!"

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the man, "You don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise, which you've no idea how to keep, and you expect other people to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault!"



In My Old Torn Up Book

Written by Jessica C

When I open my cover,
of my old torn up book
I'm taken back to conventions.
The names and well wishes
flood the two pages,
And I feel joy

When I open the first page,
of my old torn up book
I catch a beautiful handwritten letter
as it tries to escape.
This letter from my good friend from rehab,
who has the biggest heart I've ever seen,
And I feel like reminiscing on our time
together.

When I open "Our symbol",
of my old torn up book
I'm reminded of my love of NA.
I see my handwritten notes,
and highlighted words,
And I feel like I belong.

When I open to page xix,
of my old torn up book
I find my own timing.
I read the words telling me
I get to find my place
in my own way, at my own time,
And I feel calm.

When I read the first 18 pages,
of my old torn up book
I find scribbles, memories of
reading literature with sponsors and friends.
I find purpose, I know that no other
than a recovering addict
could comprehend these words,
And I feel like I am welcome

When I read "how it works",
in my old torn up book
I find identification, clarity and wisdom.
I see my life can be more than I ever imagine,
And I feel hopeful.

When I read "what can I do",
in my old torn up book
I read while in the sitting room
of my rehab centre.
I see there's more to do when I get out,
and my fellowship will love me
more than I see,
And I feel grateful.

When I read the traditions,
in my old torn up book
I see that my predecessors have tirelessly
worked.
I see I can live principles in my daily life,
And I feel motivated.

When I read "recovery and relapse",
in my old torn up book
I see that I'm not alone.
I feel the pain of addiction,
and feel the hope of recovery,
knowing this is but a daily reprieve,
And I feel forgiveness.

When I read "we do recover",
in my old torn up book
I see surrender, honesty, open mindedness,
willingness, faith, love,
compassion and acceptance.
I know that these principles
are my saving grace,
And I feel secure in the love of the fellowship.

When I read "just for today",
in my old torn up book
I see recovery being a process.
I realize that principles of the program
shape my personality,
And I feel willing.

When I read "more will be revealed",
in my old torn up book
I see what true humility, god centeredness,
self-worth, and fellowship are.
I long to know it more,
And I feel motivated for growth.

In these final chapters
of my old torn up book
I see the way my disease can still
pop up in my life.
I cling to my book, I cling to its words,
And I know I am safe here.

The stories in my old torn up book
Provide me identification, provide me
wisdom.
They show me I can recover if I live this way
of life,
And I feel I have found my place.

In my old torn up book
I find Narcotics Anonymous
And I finally feel home.

Free

- Jenna L (Simcoe area)

Today I am free.
Free from addiction.
Addiction sucked.
Sucked the life from me.
Me is who I want to be.
Be free.
Free from the shackles.
Shackles of pain.
Pain I have pushed down.
Down into the depths of my hell.
Hell is what I have escaped.
Escaped is what I always did.
Did it help?
Help is what I have found.

Found a new way of life.
Life is becoming easier.
Easier than numbing.
Numbing was my way.
My way almost lead me to my death.
Death is scary.
Scary is a feeling.
Feeling is something I am learning.
Learning about emotions.
Emotions I have buried for years.
Years is what I have lost.
Lost, I don't feel that way today.
Today is all I can handle.
Handle this one day at a time.



hamilton area of narcotics anonymous

ONLINE NA MEETING SCHEDULE

WWW.NAHAMILTON.ORG

sunday

RIVERS EDGE

Platform: WEBEX
 Time: 3pm
 ID: 620 085 265
 PW: 12and12
 or 1226312 from phones
 and video systems

COURAGE TO CHANGE

Platform: ZOOM
 Time: 7pm
 ID: 733 883 432
 PW: Courage

wednesday

BACK TO BASICS

Platform: WEBEX
 Time: 7pm
 ID: 790 306 148
 PW: 7737

thursday

HOPE NOT DOPE

Platform: ZOOM
 Time: 7pm
 ID: 850 502 399
 PW: jimmyk

* for more NA meetings, please visit: https://na.org/?ID=virtual_meetings



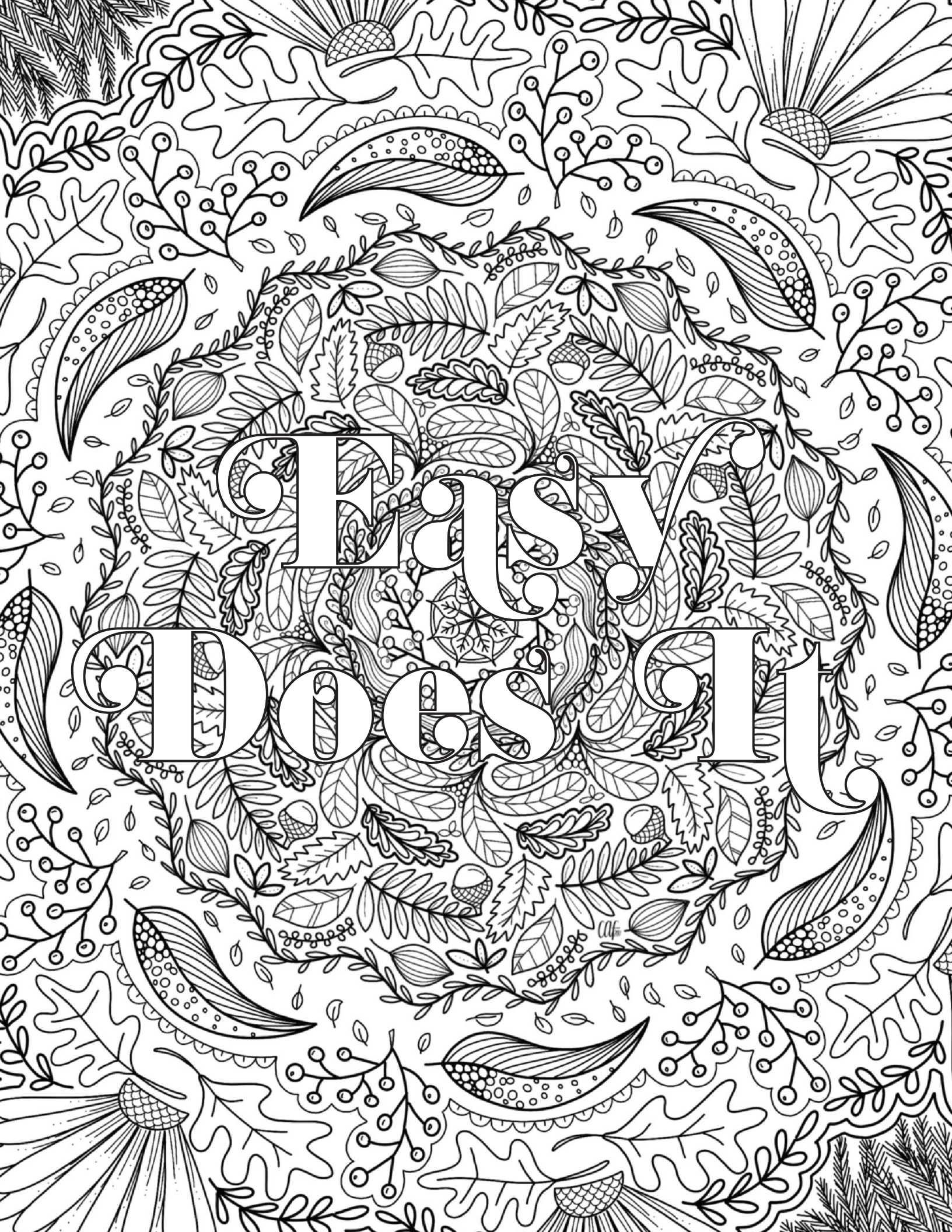
Just

for

today



Keep
coming
Back



GIVE THANKS