

A Brief History of Nicotine Anonymous

The roots of Nicotine Anonymous first took hold in the Southern California living room of one of the cofounders, Rodger F. in February of 1982. The group consisted mostly of Alcoholics Anonymous members who realized their need to focus on their nicotine addiction and to stop smoking. Since anything but alcohol is an outside issue for Alcoholics Anonymous, a separate group was necessary.

With permission from Alcoholics Anonymous, the founding members of our fellowship adapted the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Although there is common ground in the use of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, these fellowships are not affiliated. Alcoholics Anonymous also gave us permission to adapt their preamble. Our Preamble became the following:

Nicotine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women helping each other to live our lives free of nicotine. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other so that we may be free from this powerful addiction. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using nicotine. There are no dues or fees for Nicotine Anonymous membership; we are self supporting through our own contributions. Nicotine Anonymous is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization or institution, does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. Our primary purpose is to offer support to those who are trying to gain freedom from nicotine.

Maurice, a member, authored an article for *Readers Digest* in May of 1985. Thousands of letters poured in from people wanting to know more about this new 12 Step fellowship known then as “Smokers Anonymous.” Within a year there were a hundred meetings identified.

In May of 1988, the fellowship’s first World Services Conference was held in San Francisco. Thanks to a well-documented chain of events the fellowship was renamed Nicotine Anonymous in Phoenix, Arizona at the 1990 World Services Conference. As with most organizations, it becomes typical to use an abbreviated name. For our common welfare and unity a vote at the 2000 World Services Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona decided that “NicA” would be the one abbreviation the fellowship would use.

We hold an annual conference in the spring and all members are invited to attend. Each year the conference is held in various parts of the United States, depending on members who volunteer to host the event. The conference serves to strengthen us in our path to freedom from nicotine and as an official meeting to address fellowship business.

As of 2005, Nicotine Anonymous World Services serves a worldwide fellowship with over 500 meetings. These face-to-face meetings have been supplemented by both online and telephone meetings. There is a well-managed web site and literature fulfillment service available to the membership. The elected all-volunteer board consists of nine members and meets four times per year. There are also numerous coordinators who volunteer to provide specific services that help World Services fulfill our fellowship’s primary purpose- “to offer support to those who are trying to gain freedom from nicotine.”

The rest of the story can be read in our literature. Please feel free to learn more about us to see if you want what we have. A warm welcome awaits you!