

TIME RECOGNITION

To my knowledge there has never been a written description of the "chip system" we use in Narcotics Anonymous groups in our area. Almost any member is accorded the privilege of giving out the chips from the time when they have the first inklings of what recovery might mean in their lives to being an oldtimer.

WHITE CHIP: The white chip is the sign of surrender, the color of cleanliness and purity and purity is considered to be earned by all the pain and suffering we experienced getting "qualified" for the program. The white chip is given to you; the rest are earned. Use of any mind-altering substance is a relapse and the person seeking recovery is expected to pick up a white chip on their own. Not everyone picks up a white chip at their first meeting because they are unsure of their sincerity. For this reason, we don't force a chip on anyone.

ORANGE CHIP: Orange is the international color of communication. This caring and sharing chip is given to members achieving 30 days without using. The chip came into being because in Atlanta, we felt that someone being released from a 28 day treatment should have a sign of group recognition, making that going home period a little more special. The color of this chip was brown when we were using engraved chips but changed to orange when the new chips became available.

RED CHIP: The color of danger, this chip alerts us to stop, look and listen. This is the period in recovery when we are most likely to say to ourselves "addicts can't stay clean 90 days! I must not be an addict". Group members are able to follow the progression of another members recovery just by following them through the chip system. This helps members know where someone is in their recovery and puts us in a position to help.

YELLOW CHIP: The color of sunshine, the yellow chip is also a sign of caution. We're not out of the woods yet. This six month chip is given with an air of caution but with hope that we can begin to see the light.

Note: Occasionally a member will say that the chip system doesn't work for them because group recognition takes them out of a 24 hour frame-work. Thinking about "all that time clean", they fear using again. Saying they want to stay clean just for today, we understand and let them alone. A member who falsifies their clean time is really sick and asking for help in a way that an alert group can respond to.

TODAY!!!

Today, I did not have to use! This is the greatest reward that I'll ever have. It meant that I didn't have to lie, steal, con, or be sick. It is the finest of the rewards that N.A. has given me in my personal recovery, to have a choice and not to be forced by my disease to use.

With this freedom, I feel a closeness with my Higher Power, the gift to live. The gratitude that I have from this is indescribable, only another addict can understand it through empathy.

