

International News From NADA

August 2026

“Know where you stand, and stand there.” Daniel Berrigan, SJ

What Is NADA?

NADA’s founder, Michael Smith, told us that the word NADA was suggested by a New Mexican member who intended the Spanish meaning: “implying *no drugs* and *no nonsense* = Keep It Simple. NADA starts you on the path to change – other things will be on that path but acupuncture gets you on the self-help path. It is a simple method which is a first step in treatment.”



Echoing those words is Lars Wiinblad. Going through old papers, we came across something from Lars, dated just about 10 years ago. He talked about the term NADA, saying: “No words could describe the NADA protocol in a proper way.” So NADA/Denmark decided just to call it “NADA,” not the NADA protocol or NADA acupuncture or to use the word acudetox or even acuwellness: “Because none of those terms fully captured the NADA Spirit and the inner personal work and not-for-profit treatment that NADA is.”



A major inspiration for this was Jesse Morgan, founder of the Men’s Services at Lincoln Recovery. Lars said, “To take part in Jesse’s group was a revelation of the power of the needles in the process of personal transformation. At the same time, Carlos Alvarez’s description of the words *serenity, patience, wisdom, courage and acceptance* in recovery was a perfect match. This unique approach about the nonverbal NADA protocol is the ability to make people relax and feel safe, leveraging physical and mental stress, but, at the same time, creating strength and a possibility for counseling and inner transformation.”

“Since the NADA protocol works by mobilizing the existing internal resources of a person, every aspect of a clinician's interaction with persons in need is to help them help themselves.” – MIKE

NADA Is a School by Ralph Raben

Through Michael, I have understood what acupuncture is. He is my important teacher and model. I have learned that NADA is a *school*, a training for the ability to better internal self-regulation and not just a method of treatment. It is a tool to be respectful – and to be thankful to take part in a process of letting go, to be curious for a healing process.



NADA is an intelligent, universal, simple and effective tool to make harmed women and children stronger. It is a therapy that can give them what many of them have missed: *a safe place*.

Precisely because it has no direct specific effects, NADA has a universal effect. This is the inner intelligence we work with in the NADA protocol. Yes, it works, every day, worldwide. More than 10,000 people are treated with it every day in order to become healthy or to endure life better.

When I recently asked Carlos “What Is NADA?” he replied, “NADA is hope in recovery.” That pretty much echoes what he said so many years ago when he was asked to explain how NADA works. His answer then was: *“We don’t know how it works, but we know that it works. If the patient leaves the clinic with a smile and asks, ‘Can I come back tomorrow?’ then that is a statement, there is hope for healing.”*

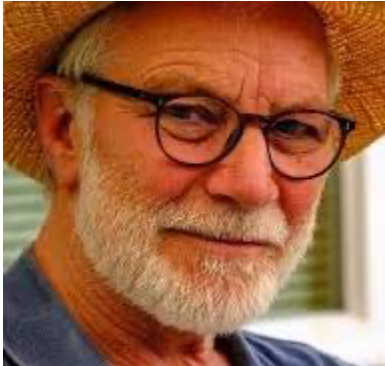


When Nancy Smalls was asked the same question, her reply was: *“Nada much* is what we started NADA with – a few needles and some chairs, a couple of hundred clients, and an occasional umbrella ‘cause the ceiling leaked. We did a whole lot with nothing, but if it wasn’t for Mike Smith there wouldn’t be a NADA.”

For those few who might not know, Nancy is founder of the award-winning Maternal Substance Abuse Services program at Lincoln Recovery Center. The program treated over 120 clients daily, and it was the first of its kind nationally and internationally.

“Adults often try to guess and generalize the function of the magnetic beads. So they imagine it forces a person to be silent rather than just relaxing or balancing. They expect the bead to be a bossy parent instead of a flexible part of nature.” - MIKE

News From NADA in Germany



Wolfgang Weidig is a Graduate Social Pedagogue and a psychoanalytically oriented social therapist. In his first job, he worked for some years as a specialist psychiatric nurse. From 1991 to 2016, Wolfgang was the therapeutic director of the Bokholt Specialty Clinic for Addiction Therapy, which he had helped found. He is also co-founder of NADA in Germany, and, while he recently stepped down from his position on the NADA board, he is still doing NADA's work. Over the years he has graciously shared a lot of his and others' work with NADA and here he is doing this again.

Why I Value the Use of Magnetic Beads on Reverse Shen Men So Much

by Wolfgang Weidig

In mid-2000, NADA Germany began a pilot program in Hamburg at a family-planning center to treat adolescents with ADHD and their parents using magnetic beads. The project was led by family therapist Heike Stubbe who was a member of our NADA board at the time. The results were so positive that we decided to include this application in our courses as well.

In 2000, the child psychiatry clinics at Lincoln and Morrisania hospitals in the South Bronx conducted a six-week clinical trial of this method – their findings showed a significant treatment effect. The beads were also used on newborns with withdrawal syndrome and very restless children whose mothers were addicted to drugs. That was our target group at the beginning as well.

Midwife Natascha Neben is seen here applying magnetic beads to a baby. Since then, the magnetic



beads have been successfully used in many areas of healthcare and beyond, and the application has steadily gained in importance. The method is very easy to use, and the results are better than we initially anticipated. The treatment involves small magnetic beads—coated with a thin metal alloy to prevent allergic reactions—which are applied to the skin. The magnetic charge of the magnets used is very low at 800 gauss, but they have a lasting effect because they can be worn on the body around the clock. Gauss describes the strength of the

magnetic field, but not the effect that a person feels. That varies from person to person.

The magnetic beads are applied to the back of the Shen Men ear acupuncture point, which is why it is also referred to as Reverse-Shen Men. Since the ear is primarily innervated by the vagus nerve in this region, the relaxing effect is understandable as it stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system. The goal is to activate the body's self-healing powers. Because they are placed hidden behind the ear, they are not visible to others.



The beads are easy and simple to use. According to NADA's founder, Michael Smith, if you can get the help of an 8-year-old so much the better. *Though even better than that would be to access the 8-year-old in yourself.*

Michael was asked if it would be interesting to give children a bit of instruction and then see where they would place the beads – he said it would be more interesting to give them *no instruction* and then see where they would place the beads.

In a 2015 article in Guidepoints, Jo Ann Lenney provides a very compelling account of various positive experiences with the magnetic beads on the Reverse-Shen Men. Jo Ann is seen here giving the magnetic beads to her mentor and boss, Nancy Smalls. [Nancy claimed the magnetic beads helped her when her “knees were kicking her in the butt.”]



In her article, Jo Ann describes the magnetic beads application and effectiveness in the areas of trauma healing, emotional and psychological regulation, as well as in specific contexts such as prisons and homeless shelters. For refugees and families in rehabilitation programs, the application appears to help reduce stress, anxiety and conflicts.

Successful use among prison inmates and homeless individuals is also described.



I gained my own experience using the magnetic beads at our clinic, the Bokholt Specialty Clinic, near Hamburg and also through the extensive feedback from our NADA training sessions. The magnetic beads helped our adolescent patients with substance use disorders in withdrawal to become calmer overall and to get through the weekend when fewer treatments took place.

Upon their discharge from in-patient withdrawal treatment, the adolescent patients often asked to receive the beads to take with them as they returned to their daily lives. They found this form of farewell to be a gesture of appreciation – combined with the hope of staying clean.

From the Forensic Clinic in Hamburg-Ochsenzoll, we know that patients who had been hospitalized there for many years were better able to cope with daily life with the help of the beads. We heard that the staff there also greatly appreciated the use of the beads.

Many course participants report having had positive experiences with patients who, for example, were afraid of needles or requested this treatment in addition to the NADA protocol so that they could comfortably manage the intervals until their next acupuncture session.

Not only did they feel more relaxed, but they also felt more energetic and determined. One patient said she felt she could “uproot trees.”

Because this form of treatment, unlike acupuncture, is not subject to any legal restrictions in Germany, it is very popular among staff who are not authorized to insert needles. It is also very popular among those who provide out-patient care and do not have the time to insert needles. Incidentally, the feedback from these out-patient clients is very positive.

Concluding Remarks

- The magnetic bead technique is simple, easily accessible to everyone, quick and versatile.
- It can be used in clinical, social and informal settings.
- The beads offer a non-invasive, cost-effective and legally uncontroversial method for releasing emotional and physical blockages.
- Anyone can apply a bead behind their own ear – see NADA Germany’s website.
- The beads can help manage all kinds of stressful situations, i.e., exam stress, stress associated with nicotine withdrawal, social anxiety, and more.
- They are also helpful in situations where there is no one available to administer acupuncture.
- Due to their effect on the vagus nerve, the beads have a regulating and universal effect.

In my view, a psychological component also plays an important role in their effect in the sense of a *transitional object*. The *object* conveys a sense of security, support and protection, especially in difficult or unfamiliar situations. For example, with the help of the Reverse-Shen Men beads, I was able to successfully support our cleaning assistant during her driver’s license exam, which she had previously failed several times.

I consider the magnetic beads application a major achievement because it offers help to anyone suffering from stress. And that certainly isn’t limited to our patients alone. It includes colleagues,

neighbors, friends, their children, partners – and anyone who needs simple and effective support in managing their daily lives.

“The highest goal is for the treatment to help people help themselves.” - MIKE



Along with all his other accomplishments, Wolfgang has been taking pictures since he received his first camera as a young boy. He has graced these pages before with his photos and has helped us welcome summer in this issue with some of the delights in his garden. This photograph seems a perfect segue into Wolfgang's thoughts on the meaning on NADA:

What Is NADA?

To me, NADA is an international community dedicated to helping people around the world who are in need or struggling to cope with the demands of daily life. What unites us is the NADA Spirit, which combines humanistic values, such as respect, human dignity and compassion with a form of treatment that instills hope. NADA is therefore inextricably linked to the NADA Protocol, because it is not just faith and hope for a better future that matter, but also the special commitment and the treatment with needles which are applied with the conviction that they will help even in a situation perceived as hopeless. – Wolfgang

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News From NADA in Israel by Yotam Alef

Yotam Alef is an acupuncturist and addiction counselor. He was the director of a drug rehab center in Israel and has used NADA in treatment for many years. He was trained in the NADA protocol in 1995 by Brian McKenna and Naomi Jacoby. Dr. Smith and I had been working with Yotam since 2014. He wrote recently after his most recent NADA training. He is seen in the middle of the picture below surrounded by the NADA graduates.



These days I'm wrapping up my second training course, this time with a wonderful group of 12 practitioners who are genuinely excited about the tool they are now acquiring.

A few of the job descriptions of the people in this training group include: a registered nurse with

clinical experience in surgical and psychiatric departments; a holistic psychotherapist; a worker with a masters in criminology; a naturopath and certified auriculotherapy practitioner; and a support specialist for individuals coping with PTSD.

I am now in contact with several other organizations that have expressed interest, and I expect to open additional training courses with them in the near future.

Life goes on with all its challenges – now accompanied by the summer heat! Even so, I remain optimistic and see a meaningful and promising path of growth and development ahead. Thanks again for the spirit and encouragement. They mean a lot to me and have become an ongoing source of support in my work with the NADA protocol. – Yotam

Notes from two of the trainees: *Na'ama is a practitioner of TCM specializing in women's health. She wrote that the course provided an excellent balance of theory and hands-on practice, and that the material was presented with generosity in a warm and supportive learning environment. Na'ama recommends NADA to any healthcare professional seeking to expand their clinical skills with an evidence-informed, practical and compassionate treatment approach.*

And, she added, "Yotam, thank you for your dedication, professionalism, generosity, and the heartfelt way you shared your knowledge."

Adva said she joined the NADA training to continue growing as a therapist and to expand her professional toolbox. She considers the NADA protocol a valuable addition to her clinical practice, saying, “It is a gentle, simple and effective intervention that helps clients who are experiencing stress, anxiety and dysregulation. It integrates seamlessly with the therapeutic approaches I already use and has broadened the ways I can support my clients.”

Adva also commented on Yotam’s teaching, saying that he created a welcoming and supportive environment where everyone felt comfortable participating. “Yotam teaches with professionalism, generosity, and genuine care for his students and the people they will serve.”

“The skill that’s most important is your attitude, your sense of responsibility and your own concern for others.” - Michael Smith

When we told Yotam that we were in touch with his trainer from back in the ‘90s, he asked us to “Please say hello to Brian and thank him on my behalf for these precious seeds that he planted in my soul nearly 30 years ago.” Brian responded telling us that he was happy to know that he had touched someone in a positive way, “particularly someone who is touching other people in positive ways. This was strong with NADA.” Brian is seen here on the left with fellow seed-sowers – Carlos Alvarez, Ajandok Eőry, Sven Wahlström and others.



The seed is in the ground.
Now we may rest in hope
While darkness does its work.

Wendell Berry

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Celebrating 20 Years of NADA in Austria by Thomas Ots



Thomas Ots is a physician, researcher and author. He is a former professor of health promotion at Flensburg University in Germany, and he specializes in acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine and psychosomatics. Thomas is co-founder and current president of NADA-Akupunktur Austria and will be helping to celebrate its 20th anniversary this September 2026. Tom wrote to us recently to share a brief history of NADA in Austria.



From 2000 to 2005, I worked as a consulting physician for Chinese medicine at the Sigmund Freud Hospital in Graz on a ward for people with mental illness. [Michael Smith is seen here in front of the hospital, the birthplace of NADA in Austria.] The patients loved the acupuncture treatments, but since I was working according to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine, I could only treat a portion of the patients at a time.

Then I heard about the NADA conference at the Düren Medical Center in Germany, led by Chief Physician Peter Summa-Lehmann. There I met my old friend Ralph Raben, chairman of the

German NADA – and, of course, NADA’s founder, Dr. Michael Smith. We were all so excited because we now knew that all patients on our ward could be treated with NADA group therapy.

Shortly thereafter, Ralph came from Germany and taught the first Basic I course. The NADA protocol is so simple because it’s so effective – *or it’s so effective because it’s so simple*. Finally, a form of therapy that isn’t directed **against** (a disease), but rather **for** (the patient). The doctors, nurses and psychologists on our ward started to implement the first NADA session the very next week. Word spread quickly throughout the hospital, so that new departments were continually being trained in NADA.

A year later, in 2006, at the initiative of Juliane Cichy, MSc, we founded NADA Akupunktur Austria. Juliane is the drug addiction coordinator for the state of Styria. She received training in Berlin in 2005 and some years later – as myself – a second training at Lincoln Recovery Center in the South Bronx in 2010. Juliane told me that there was already a treatment center for people with addiction outside of Graz where NADA was being used which I hadn’t been aware of. The addiction apartment was run by

Dr. Werner Friedl, who later also served on our board. At first, our time was taken up with establishing contacts and connections with psychosocial out-patient services and hospitals. In other words, we had to do a lot of persuasion work since the idea of treating addiction with needles in the ear was difficult to imagine for most professionals in the addiction field.



In 2010, we held our first informational event. About 70 people from the addiction field attended, and many participated in the subsequent training program. This helped us spread the word, and two years later, we received our first request from a psycho-social service in the state of Upper Austria for an in-house training. This was followed by other hospitals in other states, some of which we have already trained six times.

One of our first in-house trainings with Pro Mente Upper Austria, right next to the “Blue Danube”

Since then, training sessions have taken place in all states, including at the highly renowned Anton-Proksch-Institut addiction hospital in Vienna. As is the case in many countries, our target audience has expanded: from addiction and mental illness to trauma; and in hospitals, to geriatrics and pediatric and adolescent medicine; and the latest development is NADA work in palliative care and in prisons.



In 2012, Michael visited us in Vienna and Graz. He wanted to see if we were ready to host the Euro-NADA Conference in 2013. He must have liked what he saw, because he awarded us the contract, and NADA practitioners came from all over the world, with the farthest travelers coming from New Caledonia.

Our conference on September 25 of this year, on the other hand, is planned solely as a national conference – to allow members of our Austrian NADA family to get to know one another and to network. And we'd like to celebrate our 25th anniversary with a conference lasting several days, just like the absolutely inspiring 25th anniversary of NADA/US in New Orleans which Ralph and I were happy to attend. New Orleans is a wonderful crazy place – we almost couldn't believe that we were in the U.S.

Some of the highlights of this year's conference will be:

- A look back at 20 years of NADA in Austria;
- A presentation on NADA for students with ADHD, and one for social media addiction which is becoming a growing threat to young people;
- A presentation on pregnant women with substance use disorders and their children;
- And one on NADA in a correctional facility and another on NADA's role in the Mobile Palliative Care Team;
- And so much more which you can see at <https://nada-akupunktur.at/>.

Our Focus Now: We've already trained many hospitals and psycho-social services, but there's still a lack of follow-up care options once patients are discharged from hospitals. So we support nurses in opening their own clinics – which is still quite rare in Austria.



And special congratulations to Juliane Cichy: Starting with the September conference, she will become the president of our Austrian NADA chapter.

“If it helps”

Something that has left a deep impression on me – From Michael, we learned the phrase “Keep it simple.” When a psychiatric clinic near Vienna introduced background music in 2013, I wrote to Michael to ask if this was in line with the NADA protocol. His answer was as clear as it was simple and brief – also just three words: *“If it helps.”*

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An Update from Ecuador, Central America by John Tindall



Following the completion of the second NADA training for the Shiwiar people, an indigenous ethnic group that inhabits the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazonia, John Tindall, NADA/GB co-founder, returned to Ecuador. He went back to work with psychologist Andrea Fernández Hontou and medical doctor Juan Sebastian Benitez who are taking the lead on developing NADA in Ecuador. John told us:

I had intended to fly into the jungle to the Shiwiar community but, due to a huge rain, the airstrip was closed. So Andrea arranged for the Shiwiar people to come out of the jungle by canoe. And so the second training was another success. Andrea and Sebastian are compassionate teachers with super communication skills and a solid knowledge of mental health and addiction.

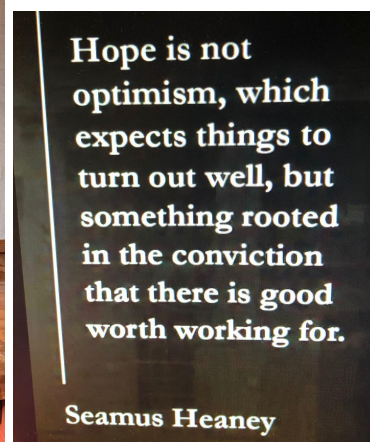


As for the Shiwiar trainees, they had perfect needle technique, point location was spot on, and their handling and health and safety was super. They are going to translate the NADA manual into Shiwiar language. First ever NADA manual in Shiwiar. Amazing!

And even more amazing, one of the Shiwiar women has already set up an alcohol treatment program in the jungle and has been using the NADA protocol since she was first trained last March 2025.



The HIV Charity Kimirina is developing well. And we are in a great position to legalize the use of auricular therapy – setting the precedent here in Ecuador, it will put the development of NADA in South America in a legitimate position. Mike Smith would be so pleased and proud of this, and he would be in agreement with this movement of NADA.



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Training in Pinedale Marks Milestone for Wyoming by Sara Bursac



In May of this year, we held the first AcuRecovery training in Wyoming to be supported by the local county's opiate settlement funds. It was held in the 2,000-person town of Pinedale, located in northwest Wyoming, an hour south of Jackson.



This training was special, not only because of the county's support, but also because of the high attendance of community members at the two training clinics. Four out of five trainees were from Pinedale, and they got the word out -- about 60 people attended two training clinics, breaking the attendance record for any of my training clinics to date.

Trisha Scott is a Pinedale resident and, for the past 10 years, has been a local provider of a free AcuRecovery community clinic. Looking at the room full of people who gathered to get a treatment at the training clinic, Trisha saw several EMTs, a candidate for sheriff, a highway patrolperson, a county employee with their high schooler who is interning for the local paper – and family and friends of the trainees. And looking at these people, Trisha said, “This is truly a cross-section of the Pinedale community.”

This training came out of a dialogue with Noah Chutz. Noah is a Physician Assistant with a background in emergency medicine, urgent care and addiction medicine. He is the director

of the emergency department at the Sublette County Hospital District. He recently opened the hospital's addiction medicine unit there.



When Trisha and I spoke to Noah about doing this training, he said, "I'm thrilled that you are both so enthusiastic to help us explore bringing AcuRecovery to Sublette County Hospital. I think it could be a great partnership, and I'm excited to see what we can set up." What this trainee group accomplished with their outreach during, and after, the training brought his words to life.

We gave the hospital's CEO, Rex Walk, a treatment during one of the training clinics, and this earned his support for hospital-based clinics, of course, pending hospital board approval and the resolution of the usual red tape. But it wasn't a "no," and there was resounding enthusiasm from the hospital for access to free community auricular acupuncture clinics.

For the moment, this decision puts the onus back on local providers to offer AcuRecovery at the hospital. The local non-hospital trainees are committed to deliver and be a step in the process of bringing these services to the addiction medicine unit, and also to other hospital departments.

The next AcuRecovery training in Wyoming will be held at Laramie's Iverson Memorial Hospital in early September. Thanks, Pinedale, for starting the trend of hospital-based trainings in Wyoming. And, thanks, for being the first AcuRecovery training in Wyoming to apply for and receive grant money from the local county opiate settlement funds.

"Opening access to the treatment itself comes first. This occurs through eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic, socio-economic and environmental barriers to starting a program of recovery. The next task is to create a zone of peace within which patients can begin to experience their own inner strengths. Finally, and in respect to the other aspects, keep it simple." MIKE

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Medicine With a Holistic View – Science to Empower Women



In an upcoming issue, we will be hearing from Sophia K. Johnson, a medical doctor, a scientist and a NADA/Germany trainer. She is working in integrative female medicine and is pursuing her habilitation in this field. Sophia also teaches NADA to midwives, especially to treat “hormone withdrawal” in post-partum depression and to treat symptoms of menopause.

Sophia told us that she “recently spent two extraordinary weeks with Ibu Robin Lim in her birthing clinic, Yayasan Bumi Sehat (Healthy Mother Earth Foundation) in Bali, Indonesia. This midwife really is a ‘world hero’ helping in catastrophes and during her daily work to enable women to gently birth in peace to heal Mother Earth. She is such an inspiration for me.”

The clinics are dedicated to reducing maternal and infant mortality by providing free pre-natal care and gentle birthing services to low-income families in Indonesia. Sophia’s goal is to train the midwives, doulas and staff working at Bumi Sehat to use the NADA protocol, in part for post-partum treatment, exhaustion and lactation.

Ibu Robin Lim says that we should: “Go to the least, the lost, the last,” echoing Michael Smith’s words: “Go to those most in need.”

To learn more: <https://sophia-johnson.de/en/>

Even before reading her article, we will get to meet Sophia at the NADA conference in London in October. And, about the conference, this is a reminder that it will be held in the Sarah Fell Room at The Friends House, Euston Road, London. Places are limited to about 100 delegates. To book a place, contact Ewan or Sarah at info@nadagbacupuncture.co.uk. In the United States, contact Jo Ann at joannlenney@outlook.com or 914-498-0031.

NADA/GB has arranged discounted accommodations at the Tavistock Hotel, 48-55 Tavistock Square London WC1H 9EU. Double sole-use room is £209.00 per room per night, including Buffet English Breakfast and VAT at the prevailing rate. Contact Central Reservation Office at +44 (0) 207 278 7871 or info@imperialhotels.co.uk, quoting the reference "NADA."

“NADA meets every year or so to have sympathetic goals – but not rules.” MIKE

The Spirit of NADA – *Mike Smith*



The NADA protocol started with one needle plugged into a machine and an addict turning it up high for the buzz.

It started with heroin addicts and alcoholics who said this would help them. Doctors were saying that their disease didn't relate to endorphins so acupuncture wouldn't work for them.

This was in the 1970s in the South Bronx where 10 percent of the population was on drugs. Two hundred and fifty people lined up that first morning with just one day's notice that the clinic would be opening. We started giving acupuncture twice a day because we were trying to copy the heroin. Heroin works for 6-to-8 hours so we thought acupuncture would work for 6-to-8 hours. But the machine broke and the clients stopped coming for the second treatment. This taught us that the more gentle the treatment, the longer the effect. We also learned not to try to explain the treatment because this would limit us.

A pill doesn't have wisdom but acupuncture has wisdom – from the very first. We didn't understand that for four or five years. Until you get out of things, like machines, you can get trapped by your own mind.

Taoist philosophy suggests that the name NADA is important because in treating people we do a lot, an excess, and we can forget that the rest of life is out there. NADA is a simple, drug-free, centered Taoist concept of acting without acting. It represents what fits with other things -- like jails and emergency rooms.

The Spirit of NADA was at first to allow ourselves to find that Spirit.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. For more information, contact Jo Ann Lenney at WhatsApp at 1-914-498-0031 or joannlenney@outlook.com