



## **Carrying the Message**

We are a fortunate bunch, those of us who have found freedom from active addiction in the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Before coming to NA, most of us had longed to be accepted, loved, and forgiven. When we came to our first meeting, we were given all that and more. No one cared what we had to do to get here, they knew. The one thing we all understand is the pain that motivates each of us to reach out to a group of recovering addicts for help.

As members of this fellowship, we must keep that still suffering addict in mind. When a newcomer walks in to a meeting, searching for freedom are they going to be received warmly, will they be given a hug, and are they going to hear a message that gives them hope?

As addicts, it is often easy for us to forget that our groups exist for only one reason, to carry the Narcotics Anonymous message of freedom from active addiction. We tend to get distracted as our lives get richer and fuller. We may get so caught up in our own interests that we forget what gave us this wonderful new life in the first place. Our literature tells us "we can only keep what we have by giving it away"; if we do not use it, we will surely lose it.

We can avoid falling into this trap by being of service to the fellowship that has given us so much. Getting involved helps us to feel a part of instead of apart from. Being of service to others helps us to find the humility we need to survive this disease and grow in our recovery.

Remember that still suffering addict? Being involved in service is one way we can be assured that our groups are focused on carrying the message. To attract and share our recovery with new members we must have groups that are grounded in the twelve traditions, with members that are committed to the home group, and a service structure working within the twelve concepts to help addicts find our doors. These new members must also be able to find a sponsor who is actively working the steps and applying the principles of the program to their lives, someone who is willing to show them how to recover not just tell them.

There is only one requirement for membership "the desire to stop using" but there are many benefits. The privilege of service is one of these benefits.

Randy E.

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# Tough Love

I am a recovering addict in Central Illinois with 4 years clean and serene; enjoying freedom from the lifestyle that I was used to living for so long. I owe everything to my Higher Power, the program of Narcotics Anonymous, a willingness to change, and actively working the 12-steps with my sponsor. Recently, I was able to experience recovery in different way. I received a call from my stepfather and mother who live in Ohio. My mother has been with me during my active addiction, and has watched me change my life through the application of this program. She also realizes that I have seen many addicts come and go through the fellowship. My stepfather's grandson has started to use drugs, and lives with them. They called me so that I could help

them understand what it was he was using. They are finding things around, but since they are earth people, they have no clue as to what it is. I shared my experience, strength, and hope with them, both as an addict and as a friend of the many addicts I have met in the rooms of NA. I hate that my mother will have to go through someone else in her life using, because I know that what I put her through was enough for any one person in their lifetime. I had to share with them about tough love, how not to enable him, and, as painful as it may be, to let him hit his bottom. That until he has had enough, that there is nothing that they can do to make him stop. I asked mom to step back and think of what it was like when I was using; and all the attempts they made to make me stop. It did not work until I was ready to surrender. I am so grateful to be in a

place today where I can help them with them with the questions that they have. My stepfather told me how much he values the suggestions that I gave him, knowing that I have been there, and done that. That feels good because four years ago they would not have asked me for my advice about anything. It is only through this program that I can be a respected person in the eyes of my family. Maybe the experiences I gained in the horrors that I lived through will be of assistance to his grandson. I pray that the suggestions I gave, although they will not be easy for them, will somehow help this young man. I can only hope that he will find his bottom before the disease of addiction kills him.

Lee C.

**Only One Promise  
Area of Narcotics  
Anonymous**

**The Guardian** is a free monthly publication serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous.

## **Newsletter Subcommittee**

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**Helpline: 866-454-3784**

**24 hours toll free**

**Upper Cumberland Area of  
Narcotics Anonymous web  
site: <http://www.nauca.org>**

## **Meetings in the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous:**

Crossville NA Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

Daily Reprieve  
Wartburg, Tennessee

Getting Started  
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group  
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere Group  
Albany, Kentucky

Primary Purpose Group  
Smithville, Tennessee

Unity Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

Who Are You Group  
Pikeville, Tennessee  
(Note: This meeting is held in a correctional facility and is only accessible to those with clearance and approval.)

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## Remembering I Have a Disease

*Based on our experience, we believe that every addict, including the potential addict, suffers from an incurable disease of body, mind, and spirit. (Basic Text pg xv)*

One of the first things I was told when I came to NA was that I had a disease. Then I was shown in *Why Are We Here*, that my recovery was my responsibility.

Throughout the Basic Text, I am told that my disease, left untreated, will return. I will return to active addiction and the hell that comes with it. I continually ask myself why take that chance? This is not a scare tactic. This comes from years of combined experience of my predecessors who loved me enough to share the truth with me.

I want to share a definition of disease with you. The power of each word in our literature really came alive for this addict when my sponsor allowed me to come to understand how words had lost their power in my heart.

### disease

**1. medical condition:** a condition in humans, plants, or animals that results in pathological symptoms and is not the direct result of injury.

**3. problem in society:** a serious problem in society or with a group of people.

### pathological

**1. extreme:** uncontrolled or unreasonable.

**2. of disease:** relating to disease, or arising from disease.

What this means to me, along with the definitions given in our literature, is that I have a disease that tells me I don't have a disease. This addict has found it absolutely necessary to practice diligent vigilance to insure myself the freedom that NA has to offer.

How do I practice that vigilance? I go to meetings. I treat the suggestions of the literature as a guiding sacred code of conduct, not a set of suggestions that I need to adapt to my life. I adapt my life to the principles in our steps and traditions. I work my steps diligently with my sponsor. I study the traditions and concepts and try to give away in service what has been so freely given to me. So many ask why? Because the experience of NA says this is how I get freedom from active addiction.

I came here searching for freedom from the hell I was in. What I found was freedom from active addiction plus freedom from my past and from my future. The first nine steps freed me from the past and the last three freed me from a future of insanity. But they have to be worked on a constant and consistent basis.

Here's the reason I am telling myself these things now. Just because I get my life, wife, and job back, just because it is summer time, just because I don't feel sick today does not mean my program should become any less of a priority than it was when I first came to NA. So many of my NA family continues to drop anchor when life gets better. Where in our literature does make this suggestion? And where does that leave the members coming in? Where does that leave our service structure?

I have to share this because when I came to NA I was asked by another member if I had cancer would I leave it untreated. I said of course not. That would be a certain death sentence. I just finished cancer treatment. I didn't pass on treating my cancer and I didn't pass on treating my disease of addiction, both would be a certain death sentence left untreated.

**P.S.** I can only keep what I have by giving it away.

In Loving Service,  
Lee A.

## **We need your help!**

We need your help. The Guardian is in need of submissions. It can be a personal story of how you used the Fellowship or your Higher Power to get through a tough time, your views on a particular quote from the Narcotics Anonymous literature that you happen to like, Or a simple expression of gratitude.

Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't very important either, just remember that shorter is better.

The only real criteria for submissions are that they reflect the message of Narcotics Anonymous and stick to the identification of ourselves as addicts suffering from the disease of addiction.

Submissions can be brought to the Upper Cumberland Area Service meeting, sent to The Guardian, 140 Cottle Ln, Jamestown, Tenn. 38556 or E-mailed to:

ucaguardian@hotmail.com

Thank you for your support.

# Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a form of service based on mutual trust & respect. With these principles as a foundation a wonderful relationship is possible, truly making it a two-way street. A sponsor is just another addict with more experience in recovery, who is willing to take the time to help others in theirs. We find someone we can relate to and ask them to sponsor us. To use a sponsor we call them, we talk to them about what's going on in our lives, and we listen to their suggestions. We learn to listen. When asked to listen, all that's asked is that we hear. Sponsors aren't marriage counselors, money-lenders, babysitters, authority figures, Gods or Gurus. A sponsor can't tell us what is best for us; we have our own world in which we must live. They can't fix us, or convince us of the necessity to choose the uncertainty of change over the safe misery of staying the same. A sponsor's purpose isn't to co-sign bullshit, help us stay in limbo, or take care of our responsibilities. If others do for us, what we need to do for ourselves, they contribute to our fear and weakness. They can't take away our loneliness, or pain, or grow for us. A sponsor can help us become less self-centered, more accepting of ourselves and others, and help us understand what we are feeling. Then the answers are obvious. Our sponsor is mainly a guide through the steps, who we look to for direction.

Anytime we are asked to sponsor an addict we need to remember this is a privilege and with privilege comes responsibility. We don't just share our experience, strength and hope; we make a commitment to share our time and attention. We ask questions, we listen; we get to know each other. We must be careful that sponsoring doesn't become a disservice. If we tell someone what to do, we haven't done as asked. If we tell them they shouldn't feel something, we're trampling feelings. If we solve their problem, we've failed, as strange as that seems. As a sponsor we give of ourselves. If we are unable or unwilling to do this, we need to say so and direct addicts to someone who is. If a sponsee is struggling with something that we personally have no experience with, we listen and if possible, direct them to an addict who does have that experience. A sponsor hangs in there as long as they believe that a sponsee is willing to grow, but we must grow for ourselves. If a sponsor begins to care

out of pity or to lose faith in a sponsee, they inhibit the growth of the sponsee and of themselves. You can't expect someone to see eye to eye with you when you're looking down on them.

God, in His wisdom, selected a group of men and women to be carriers of a message. He went not to the proud, the mighty, the famous or the brilliant to find messengers. But, instead to the humbled, the sick, the unfortunate, he went right to the addict. As if God were saying; "Into your hands alone, I entrust this power beyond estimate. God selected us to be carriers of a message, that which has been denied all others. Not scientists or statesmen, fathers or mothers, not even doctors or priests, have been given this gift to heal other addicts, which we are entrusted with. It must be used unselfishly; and carries with it responsibility. No day can be too long; no demand on our time too hard; no case too hopeless; no effort too great. It must be used with tolerance for it isn't restricted to any race, creed, sex or denomination. Personal criticism we can expect; lack of appreciation will be common; and our motives will be misjudged. We must be prepared for adversity, but this adversity can help us to grow spiritually. If our efforts are successful, we mustn't ascribe it to personal superiority, but always remember that it is a gift.

If God wanted learned men to have this power it would've been entrusted to the physician and scientist. If God wanted eloquent men, there would've been many anxious for the task, for talk is the easiest to use of all the talents with which mankind has been endowed. If God wanted scholarly men, the world is filled with those better qualified who would've been available. We weren't chosen because of exceptional talents. We were chosen because we've been the outcast of the world. Our personal experience has made or should make us alert to the cries for help from the lonely desperate hearts of addicts everywhere.

Author Unknown

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on September, 16 2007 At 2:30 pm CST in Crossville, Tennessee at the Crossville NA facility. Come check it out to see what the service committee is doing for the Upper Cumberland Area and your group to aid in better carrying the message to the still suffering addict.

