



THE GUARDIAN

JULY 2009

What Is Recovery

What is recovery? The dictionary defines recovery as “to return to an original state”. However, that meaning can be very confusing to some of us. After all, our original state may have not been much of a picnic either. I can’t speak for anyone else, but I don’t remember a time when I wasn’t at least a little screwed up. Even in my youngest years, I remember using things to make me feel better, being manipulative, dishonest and feeling like I didn’t belong. These feelings may not have been as full blown or as chaotic as they became later on, but they were there just the same. When I first found out what recovery meant, I wasn’t sure if that was really something I wanted. Did I really want to return to my original state? But after I thought about it for awhile, I realized that is says recovery is returning to “an original state”, not necessarily *my* original state.

To understand better how the definition of recovery fits into the program of Narcotics Anonymous, and my understanding of myself as an addict, a recovering addict and a human being, it is imperative for me to first look at what NA says my role in society as a recovering addict is. My goal in recovery is to be a productive member of society. To grow and help others to grow and to

give back where I used to always take. To live by the spiritual principles that say the common good is more important than my special interests, and that I can no longer expect something for nothing in life, or to do bad to others without expecting bad in return. So, maybe that’s the original state of which they speak. Maybe it’s not my original state I’m striving to return to, but the original state of humanity. Maybe it’s not returning to how I used to be, as much as returning to how I was intended to be. In recovery we are finding a new way to live. New to me, perhaps, but not necessarily new to others who already live the way they were intended to.

Recovery, for me, is about being something different than I’ve ever been before. Striving to live a life based on spiritual principles. Helping humanity by doing the next right thing and helping others to learn how to live life also. Maybe I never was really the person I was supposed to be, but that doesn’t mean it’s too late to start now. Lost dreams awaken and new opportunities arise, and we do recover.

Anonymous

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T.I.M.E. – Things I Must Earn

How often have you attended meetings and observed the inner happiness of some members? They weren't using, had self-respect, and they seemed to enjoy a freedom that we desperately wanted. In early recovery, many of us still felt fearful, helpless and hopeless. We felt vulnerable and exposed, because we didn't have our drug of choice to help us fill the spiritual void we still felt inside. What did these people hold inside that we couldn't find? We didn't use, just like them, went to meetings, just like them, we listened, just like them, and we did what they told us to do; we kept coming back. So what was wrong with us? The short answer: nothing. We were doing what we're supposed to do. Our fellow members did not receive their gifts of recovery overnight. Our Basic Text reminds us, "We didn't become addicted in one day, so remember – easy does it." (p.18). We can't expect instant miracles in all areas of our lives just because we put down that fix, pill or drink. However, we are experiencing the one promise our program has to offer, "Narcotics Anonymous offers only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction..." (p.102).

If you think about your own personal past, that alone is a miracle. And just because we don't have the inner peace that we observe in others, it may be that we just haven't looked deep enough. For example, do the never-ending thoughts of using still take up every moment of your day, and invade

your dreams every night? Are you regaining your health? Can you actually hold down food when you eat? Can you actually stand to look yourself in the mirror today? Paying a few bills? Do you want a better life for yourself? Are some (or all) of these things a change from your active addiction? Well, those fellow members you see who are happy, joyous and free felt the same. One thing they discovered in their process was: T.I.M.E. – Things I Must Earn. Over time, the changes they needed to make involved letting go of their old, negative thought patterns which seemed to "protect" them in their once fear-driven lives. When they quit recycling those old concepts, they were open to working the Steps, revealing their true nature to their sponsors, and developing a loving relationship with the God of their understanding. They acquired the willingness to, and then made those changes, little by little. They earned their serenity over time, not overnight. Now, today, I can get out of my own way and start helping myself. I can find the happiness, self-respect and freedom that I see in others by being open to the changes I need to make. I can listen to my sponsor and fellow members on a deeper level about the changes they made, and I can pray to my Higher Power for the willingness to follow their suggestions. - Am I willing to allow myself T.I.M.E.?

Joe A.

Jimmy K. - "That's one of the things I like about this program, we always have a choice."

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

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Meetings in the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous:

Rockwood New Way
To Live Group
Rockwood, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group
Crossville, Tennessee

New Beginnings
Oneida, Tennessee

Getting Started
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere Group
Albany, Kentucky

Unity Group
Crossville, Tennessee

* Who Are You Group
Pikeville, Tennessee

* Free And Clean Group
Pikeville, Tennessee

* This meeting is held in a correctional facility and is only accessible to those with clearance and approval.

PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR TRADITIONS

Tradition Seven:

"Every NA group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions."

Our whole lives, we took from others. We were always looking outside ourselves to fill our financial, emotional, and spiritual needs.

As we work the Steps, we strive to become responsible and productive members of society. Taking advantage of the charity of others is no longer an option for us. Instead of living off our families and friends, we choose to be fully self-supporting in our personal lives.

Becoming an asset rather than a liability, though it may be difficult for us, increases our self-esteem and enhances our sense of self-worth.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the seventh tradition.

Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the seventh tradition.

Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What are some ways, other than financial, that you can help NA be fully self-supporting?
4. What is the "Principle of self sacrifice" and how does it relate to this tradition?
5. What is an outside contribution?
6. Why shouldn't NA accept outside contributions?
7. The spiritual principles of this tradition are gratitude, responsibility, faith, integrity, anonymity, and freedom.
8. Define the words: gratitude, responsibility, faith, integrity, anonymity, and freedom.

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee will be held on August 16, 2009 At 2:30 pm CST in Crossville, Tennessee at the Crossville NA facility.

We are always in need of members that want to be of service to our fellowship, come and check it out to see what the service committee is doing for the Upper Cumberland Area, and your group, to help us fulfill our primary purpose; carrying the message of recovery to the still suffering addict. We have many positions that need to be filled, come and experience the many benefits of service.

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.

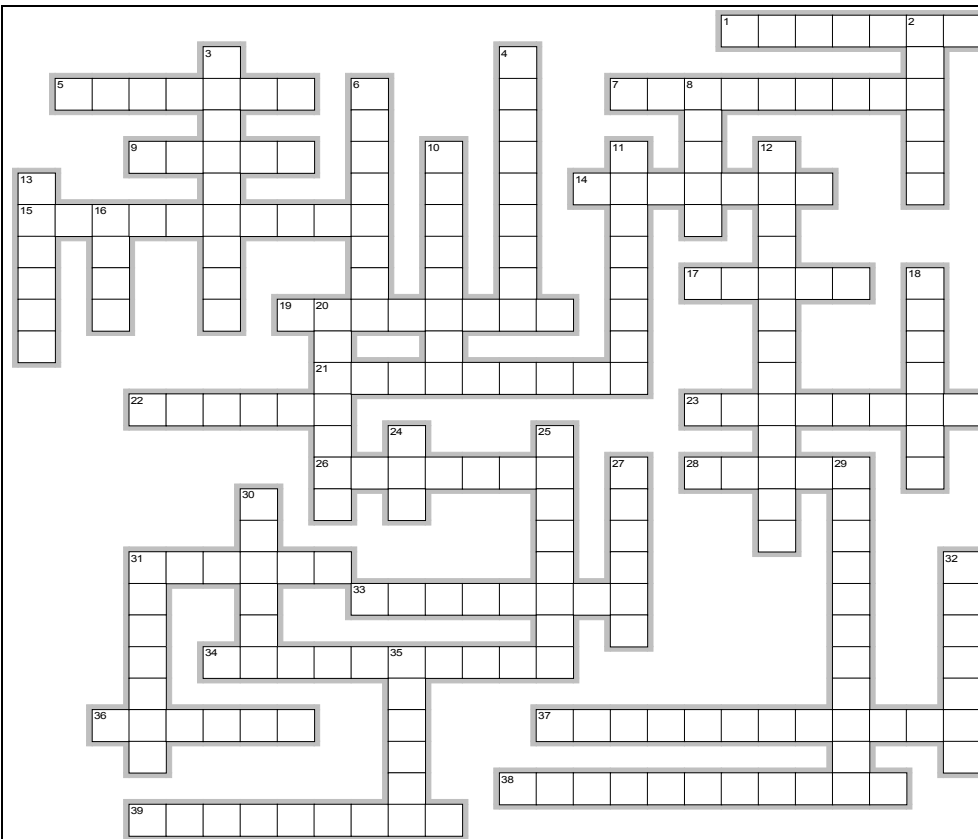
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

Step Seven "It Works"



Across

1. "We had lost the _____ to love, to laugh, and to feel." pg 72
5. "We _____ a vision of complete freedom from our shortcomings." pg 75
7. "Our concern is not to _____ exactly how or when our shortcomings will be removed." pg 71
9. "We know that we are being _____ for." pg 74
14. "We may even attain complete _____ from having to act on those defects." pg 73
15. "From our very first meeting, we sensed the love and _____ of other NA members." pg 72
17. "We _____ the God of our understanding with our lives." pg 74
19. On the other hand, some of us tried _____ with God to remove our shortcomings, guessing that would be a demonstration of humility." pg 70
21. "We are in the process of developing a _____ contact with a Higher Power." pg 74
22. "Although we've reached this point, the _____ caused by our shortcomings needs to be addressed." pg 74
23. "What we are experiencing is an awakening of the spirit—no less _____ than it sounds." pg 72
26. Regardless of how secure we feel in our relationship with the God of our understanding, we need our _____ to guide us through the Seventh Step." pg 73
28. "Our _____ gives us reason to hope for the best." pg 71
31. "We were worn out from trying to _____ and control them, and we wanted some relief." pg 70
33. "Previously, we may have felt that God was far removed and did not have much to do with us on a _____ level." pg 72
34. "The resulting pain might well be _____." pg 71
36. "Understanding that we are not _____ is a good indication of humility." pg 71
37. "When we ask our Higher Power to remove these _____, we ask for freedom from anything which limits our recovery." pg 69
38. "We admit defeat, recognize our _____, and ask for help from the God of our understanding." pg 70
39. "In this new level of _____, we accept not only our addiction but also the shortcomings related to our addiction." pg 70

All of the words in this puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why"

Pages 69 – 75. Always look in your literature for the answers.

Down

2. "The spiritual life has ceased to be a _____ we hear about in meetings; it is now becoming a tangible reality." pg 75
3. "This step is a _____ choice, a choice that goes beyond any emotional reaction or conscious act of will." pg 71
4. "In this new level of surrender, we accept not only our _____ but also the shortcomings related to our addiction." pg 70
6. "_____ is an essential ingredient of working this step." pg 71
8. "We _____ so hard to get it right." pg 70
10. "We find that our Higher Power always _____ us with what we need, and our faith grows as a result." pg 73
11. "The work we've done in the _____ steps has enriched that relationship." pg 72
12. "Any _____ with our Higher Power is prayer." pg 74
13. "We ask for help because we _____ do it alone." pg 69
16. "If this is the _____ for us, we must rely on faith." pg 71
18. "We need to remember that we are _____ to a Power greater than ourselves." pg 74
20. "Humbly asking for the removal of our shortcomings means we are giving complete _____ to that loving Power to work in our lives, believing that God's wisdom far exceeds our own." pg 69
24. "To work the Seventh Step, we must get out of the way so that _____ can do God's work." pg 69
25. "We are conscious of the God of our understanding and feel that Power's _____." pg 74
27. "We ask _____, knowing that we are powerless." pg 74
29. "An attitude of humility is not the same as _____, nor is it a denial of our good qualities." pg 69
30. "Our faith gives us _____ to hope for the best." pg 71
31. "We walked into our first _____ with a spiritual void." pg 72
32. "The _____ of the Seventh Step brings about a peace of mind that we never dreamed possible." pg 74
35. "We may have taken it for granted that God would _____ our shortcomings immediately upon request." pg 70