



THE GUARDIAN

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A little clarity about Tradition Four

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole” (Tradition Four)

I have been looking over Tradition Four again and always look at the rest of the Traditions when I do this because for this addict they are a living, breathing, and inter-connected entity.

The confusion that seems to spring from the groups over this Tradition comes from lack of simplicity. Our freedom comes as a result of the spiritual content of the principles found in all of our guiding documents. When making any decision pertaining to NA we should always refer back to those guiding documents and the experience of our predecessors. That is one part of keeping it simple. The second part of keeping it simple is EVERY decision made at any level regarding NA service, even if it is just a group, carries the possibility of affecting NA as a whole. When we start a group we accept this responsibility. So please help me, the addicts to come, and NA as a whole by being accountable to our responsibilities as NA groups. Please don't substitute self-centeredness for autonomy when using this Tradition to justify something that is outside of NA's primary purpose.

Please also remember that the simplicity that is so vital to NA's message gets covered up when a bunch of addicts act out in old compulsive behavior, thinking that they can make something feel even better. Who's to say that NA is not enough when left simple and spiritual? Spiritual Principles are sacred laws that are not negotiable meaning that even though we may try we cannot make them any better, any clearer, or any more effective. They are meant to be lived, leaving it to the self-admitted addict to choose a new way of life according to NA's spiritual principles.

Isn't it amazing how this Tradition is stuck right between the Tradition that distinguishes a personal choice, and is followed by the Tradition that clarifies the one purpose of the group? A group inventory can be very helpful to groups who find themselves in the middle of conflict especially when that conflict springs up around autonomy. Please help NA as a whole by using the tools available to the groups. Many Thanks to NA and its members for helping me stay clean and find the freedom that our program offers.

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Step Ten Word Find

The Ten Simple Realities of NA

1: The most important piece of literature is the meeting list. Studying the program and learning the principles is great; but the single most useful lesson is: where's the next meeting?

2: The most important service position is group secretary. A good group secretary has the coffee made, the chairs set up, the literature arrayed, meeting lists always available, an able chairperson or speaker ready; and generally provides or ensures an atmosphere of recovery. There will never be a shortage of egomaniacs who want to be the king of all NA; but we can always use a few more good group secretaries!

3: The most powerful example we set is staying clean. It is wonderful that we can show the newcomer credible examples of sanity, prosperity, serenity, spirituality, kindness and love. But not every member can exhibit such a wonderful life in all particulars. Almost all of us, though, can show that, together, we do stay clean. And when we work a program, we do recover.

4: The needs of the group are paramount. The primary NA message is carried in the NA groups. All too often, some groups place show ahead of substance. Just last week, the richest group in town made a multi-hundred dollar donation to area -- but refused to back up and set aside money for literature and chips! This is a kind of blindness to fundamental needs that can damage groups and their message.

5: Speakers should be NA members. It sounds ridiculous, but it happens oftener than we might admit: someone is asked to chair for the month; they ask their grand-sponsor who just Happens to be an AA member -- and while they may have terrific AA recovery, they share on and on about the Big Book, their sobriety, the Where and When, and Dr. Bob. It's as though they don't know where they are; and they carry a very confusing message to the newcomer, for whom these references might as well be Greek. It doesn't matter, and we should

have no opinion, where else a speaker goes: church, AA, school or the movies. That is their business. But they should be an NA member, familiar with the NA program and message, and capable of speaking that language to addicts. That is our business. If they're winging it, trying to substitute drugs for alcohol in their message on the fly, they are simply not gonna be able to carry a clear NA message.

6: NA groups must be good neighbors. Together we are responsible for the reputation of NA as a whole. Most groups hate to "police themselves;" very few people want to be NA cops, as it may result in being disliked! But when some members toss butts, leave spills, fight, yell and otherwise "scare the straights," or when groups leave messes for the facility to clean up, then groups lose their meeting places. We may never know how many addicts found a locked door where there should have been a meeting, and turned around to go cop, and ended up dead. Staying in one place for a long time, and caring for that place, is part of the personal and group stability that are essential parts of recovery.

7: NA members, in their own best interest, need to be patient, tolerant and forgiving. I was crazy as a newcomer. You probably were too. Just about any newcomer who qualifies as an addict didn't get here because they were having a nice day. But with time clean and energy put into recovering, most of us can turn out okay -- even terrific. The person we make fun of or insult because they're talking crap today, may be the very person we need help from tomorrow. As wise addicts have often said -- "Be kind to the newcomer; you never know whether someday you might need to ask him to be your sponsor!" As for the oldtimer, it doesn't hurt to treat him with love and respect too. Most of us will hug anybody,

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

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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

Getting Started
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere Group
Albany, Kentucky

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.)

The Ten Simple Realities of NA

(continued from page two)

but perhaps, realistically, most of us will balk at going way out of our way to help someone who has always been surly or unkind to us. Since it doesn't cost anything to be civil, it's just good insurance to bite our tongues when we want to gouge out a new excretory system for someone. Wiser addicts than me have said, whenever I'm taking your inventory instead of my own, I'm not centered in recovery.

8: God can be as simple or complex as we like; but our relationship to God needs to profoundly simple. Einstein said, "Make things as simple as possible -- but no simpler!" He also said, "When you have glimpsed utter simplicity, you have seen the hand of God." My God can be the master of the universe; but I need to keep my approach to God the same as a little child running into his daddy's arms. By starting with a God-relationship that is loving, safe and intensely personal, we may be able to trust God with the hard changes and surrenders that are required for recovery. A distant, angry, confused God-concept is, very simply, not going to be easy to trust. Keeping our own paths private, while suggesting a simple, trusting relationship with God, is the best way to insure others' right to a God of their own understanding, without any catches.

9: Life needs to be fun. Addicts always say, "I didn't get clean to be miserable." It seems that addicts who laugh, dance, sing, go out together, go traveling and to conventions, and treat themselves to some good wholesome amusement have a much easier time in recovery than those who are isolated, spartan, austere, or excessively frugal. We need not feel guilty having a good time for a while, doing nothing "productive." Mental health seems to need recreation -- which is, after all, recreating a state of mental balance. Life is tough enough without depriving ourselves of some joy. If an Area Subcommittee of NA can provide some events

for our common enjoyment, it's not a waste of time; it's a way to have clean fun together, and very much attracts the newcomer.

10: Carrying a message and Giving it away are ends, not means. At every meeting we read, "We can only keep what we have by giving it away." So often we see members with a little time, pouncing on a newcomer in the parking lot and saying, "C'mere!! Lemme give you my phone number!" Scares the pants off some of 'em. Early on, the motive of "giving it away" is selfish: literally, in order to keep it. But giving away the message of recovery is not our means of doing penance. It is an end in itself, and our highest good and primary purpose. Once we start getting sponsees, we begin to see this differently, because we start to really care about someone else's recovery, not just as "our way of getting into heaven," but for their own sake. As we really begin to want to help out of love and compassion, we start to do the right thing for the right reason. This is not a competitive sport. Others' recovery does not diminish our recovery. In fact, others' recovery can only enhance our recovery. The more people in our home group who are practicing robust programs, the more people we can rely on; and the more valuable and positive the meetings will be. By encouraging one another and supporting each other, we not only add to the mutual atmosphere of recovery -- we also change our self-concepts, from that of self-centered dope-fiends to that of loving souls, and beloved children of God. If everyone knew that they could find joyous self-approval in generosity, they'd rush to give it away! But paradoxically, it's only later that we find that if selfish gain had been our motive to serve, it would not have worked anyway. It works when we start with the decision to be loving and giving.

Anonymous

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: ucguardian@hotmail.com

Thank you for your support.

Thanks to our friends in the recovering community of the Southwest Area in the California Inland Region we now have these wonderful Word Find puzzles. We hope to have one each month, enjoy.


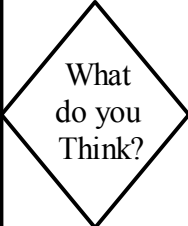
STEP TEN

W	S	A	S	N	O	I	T	O	M	E	V	I	T	C	E	R	R	O	C
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V	B	D	I	F	F	I	C	U	L	T	I	E	S	V	F	D	S	A	B

By AD

All of the words are taken from Step Ten in the Basic Text pages 41-42

ACTIONS	ANGRY
ADMITTED	AVOIDING
ANGER	CORRECTIVE
ATTITUDES	DIFFICULTIES
AWARE	EMOTIONS
BAD	FANTASIES
CHOICE	FEELINGS
CONSTANTLY	FRESH
CORRECT	HUNGRY
FEAR	LIST
FREES	LONELY
GOOD	LOOKING
HARM	MONITOR
INVENTORY	MOTIVES
NEVER	NURTURE
OURSELVES	PERFECT
PERSONAL	PREVENTIVE
PREVENT	RELIEF
PROMPTLY	RIGHT
REGULAR	STEP
RELATIONSHIP	TIRED
RESENTMENT	TOOL
TROUBLE	TRAPPED
	WELL

 <p>Food for Thought</p>	<p>Concept Twelve</p> <p>In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.</p> <p>What is the difference between service and government?</p>	 <p>What do you Think?</p>
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The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on July 20, 2008 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.

