



Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

The Guardian

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WHEN AT THE END OF THE ROAD

"When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on as best as we can to the bitter ends - jails, institutions or death - or find a new way to live." (Basic Text p.84)

If you have spent anytime at all in Narcotics Anonymous meetings then you are at least familiar with the third paragraph of "We Do Recover". Not only is it in both the Basic Text and the white booklet we normally hand to newcomers when they pick up their white tag, it is also read at the beginning of many N.A. meetings. Most of us get to where we can whisper it under our breaths as it is being read, and some can even quote it word for word. Surely you would be hard pressed to find a recovering addict who doesn't believe in the truth of this well-known paragraph.

We repeat the message of the third paragraph over and over to newcomers, especially the ominous "go on as best as we can to the bitter ends - jails, institutions and death". For many addicts, that one startling phrase is just the wake up call that they need. I know when this addict first heard it. It sent shivers down my spine, just hearing what I already knew to be true laid out in plain, simple words that could not be misconstrued. The third paragraph truly is a powerful message

message to give to the newcomer when they reach the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous.

But is the third paragraph just for newcomers? Is not the message contained in it just as true for those with time in recovery as the one just walking in the door, strung out and feeling hopeless? Even after time spent in the program, can we not reflect on this simple yet powerful message to remind us of why we need to daily work the program of Narcotics Anonymous in our lives?

None of us, regardless of our time and "stature" in N.A., are immune to the "bitter ends - jails, institutions or death" when we forget to apply the program daily in our lives and instead try to once again live our lives on self-will. If we continue on this downward path, we will once again find ourselves no longer able to function with or without drugs and facing a choice: "either go on as best as we can to the bitter ends... or find a new way to live."

For us, the "new" way may not be so new at all. It may simply be a matter of remembering and re-applying the spiritual principles that we had lost time for in our busy lives. The good news is that if I find myself running on self-will and once again surrounded by chaos, I don't have to continue to the bitter ends. I just need to put the focus back on my recovery and get back to the basics of the program. We do recover.

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Thoughts on the Third Tradition

The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.

The Third Tradition is just another place where an individual is expected to make a conscious decision about their future. For this addict I was a member the day I arrived. I wanted with all of my being to stop using.

Our other Traditions tell us that it is not the business of other members to decide who has that desire, yet our traditions ask us to be vigilant in our lives, groups, and services. This seems to cause difficulty and confusion in many places.

If these two things are in place, how do we decide how to do service in a place that is separated by the meanings of our Traditions? How does a vigilant member save face in the eyes of those who believe there are no musts in our fellowship? How does a vigilant member survive in today's NA?

I guess there is a question then of what does the we mean in NA literature. First off the definitions for requirement and membership have to be clear.

Requirement: make something necessary; to have something as a necessary precondition.

Membership: being a member of something; the thought or condition of belonging to a group such as a species, social class, team, club, or political party.

So this tells me there has to be a certain precondition met before an individual can belong to the fellowship. My understanding is that is a desire to stop using. Let's define desire.

Desire: wish for something; to want something very strongly.

So now we have an idea of what it takes to actually become an NA member.

Now I ask the question of who is responsible for making decisions in NA. Is it NA members or anyone who attends a meeting? My other question for all of us is who do we make our decisions for, NA members, newcomers, or anyone attending our meetings?

I try not to judge who has the desire and who doesn't. Yet when it's time to make decisions for our fellowship I feel like it should be by members of the fellowship. I feel like our groups should foster this type of service. I believe that our First and Second Tradition gives the expectation that we are holding ourselves accountable to responsible adherence to the principles of those Traditions.

These two traditions allow us to have such an open requirement for membership. There comes a problem when our groups have no foundation built on traditions. New members really don't even know what they are becoming members of. So in all actuality they simply become members of the personality of that group if they are not clear on the foundation of our program. Then there will always be a place for confusion amongst members because of the diversity of the foundation.

Our recovery, NA recovery, is all based on 1 foundation; the principles of our program. Our diversity should only be in the individual character of our members. When we care more about appealing to non-members than following our traditions we create dissension. Group inventories can really help us with this if they're done based on our Traditions, but only if our desire is to fulfill our primary purpose.

Our fellowship is so beautiful because we (NA members) are the center of a true miracle and the only thing that we had to do, for most of us, was admit that we wanted to stop using. What I am trying to say is try to remember when you are doing anything in our fellowship that it should be done for NA as a whole and its future members. Although softer and easier sometimes well intended things can prove to be very detrimental to a whole.

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:

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

DON'T COMPARE, IDENTIFY

Have you ever attended a meeting - or talked with other members in the Fellowship - and said to yourself, "I never did that"? Or maybe you feel that you didn't belong because you didn't feel that you suffered as much as one or more of those people? Well, maybe you haven't ... YET!

Just because you may not share the same bad experiences as someone else does not mean that you do not belong. The simple fact that your disease has led you into the rooms for recovery from addiction is proof enough of your time spent in misery, as well as your desire to change for the better. Just because someone else's brand of hell seems worse than yours doesn't mean that you haven't lived through enough pain and suffering; hell is hell no matter what form it takes in anyone's life.

Any time you feel that you haven't suffered enough, or even worse - that your life

someone else had it worse than you, that's your disease lying to you. It wants you back under its control. Your addiction is hungry and only you can feed it.

Now, today, when these thoughts arise, talk to your sponsor or a friend in the Fellowship. Let them know how you feel. They can help you discover that you DO belong, and that you need not suffer any further. In this discussion, don't compare yourself to others, but identify with their painful experiences. Feel the strength and hope in their voice. Realize that your past acts aren't as important as your present behaviors in your daily journey of recovery. Remember, WE are all in this together.

- If my disease starts lying to me today, will I do myself a BIG favor and talk with another member in the Fellowship?

- Submitted by Joe A.,

Seeing The Light

I can remember thinking how dry and boring staying clean must be. I knew I had to stop using, but I didn't really want recovery. I didn't understand what there was to look forward to. Well... no more jails and no more rehabs - that was something to I could enjoy, but what else? I had no answer. I dreaded the clean lifestyle and the years of dullness it promised.

Today my attitude is vastly different. Somewhere along the line I came to realize the serious effect my addiction was having on me. I was sick and tired of making decisions that I soon regretted. I could never feel good about how I had acted or how I had handled a particular situation, and it was eating me up inside.

could look back on and be proud of. I felt an intense need to feel good about myself, and it was out of this need that I began to feel good about staying clean in recovery. In fact I started to feel REALLY good about it. But I didn't stop there. I even quit smoking two years ago, and that decision makes me proud of myself everyday. I try to let all of my actions be guided by this principle. Above all else, I need to be able to like and respect myself.

The integrity and self-worth I have gained are invaluable. Spiritual growth now seems not just possible, but inevitable, and I feel true hope and happiness for the first time. There's nothing dull whatsoever about recovery. It's only in our addiction that we are incapable of seeing the light.

Terryl B.

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

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.

PUZZLE

STEP FOUR

V Z T L I U G C P P C F E I L E R B N M
S X L A I C U R C D P E M A H S P U Z C
E L P M I S F N O I S U F N O C N P O K
U U Y N F D O G F W S F R P U C E M Z F
S E A R C H I N G T T C E F R E P J R D
S P I Z O T S O H G M H E K S L M Z E I
I D W R I T I N G E V L O S E R N M D S
M B R M O X N C F M N C C T L N O N R C
G O D O S T C E F E D R E M V Z I R O A
S A L P F F A S V E T H A Z E F T A R R
S M N Y A R P I A N M F T E S Z C E G D
E S K A L T T L E A I C A G L P I F R P
R T L E C I T M D C E E N I N B D R C S
T E S A S T T E C S A W G R T E A A N D
S S C O R N I T R D E F E A S H R D O G
K S P O E O S O R N I F R O R I T T I J
S A D S V E M C N A S A P U N U N P S X
S O E S N E D R U B P R R G S I O P N S
G R C O R R R C F S U S O F A F C C E S
T C H R F W A Y R P F D S P A P E R T S

By 

ABLE	FREE	PERFECT
ACTION	GAIN	POSITIVE
ADMIT	GHOST	PRAY
AFRAID	GOD	PURPOSE
ANGER	GROWTH	RECOVERY
ASSETS	GUILT	RELIEF
BURDENS	HONEST	REMORSE
CARING	INVENTORY	RESENTMENT
COMPLETE	ISSUES	RESOLVE
CONFUSION	LEARN	RID
CONTRADICTION	MADE	SEARCHING
COURAGE	MORAL	SHAME
CRUCIAL	MUST	SIMPLE
DEAL	NEW	STRENGTH
DEFECTS	ORDER	STRESS
DISCARD	OURSELVES	SURFACE
FAITH	PAIN	TENSION
FEAR	PANIC	TOOL
FEARLESS	PAPER	TRAPS
FIND	PATTERNS	WAY
FOUR	PEN	WRITING

All of the words are taken from Step 4 in the Basic Text pages 27-30

Concept Eight

“Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.”
How could a lack of regular communication undermine those concepts, and the integrity and effectiveness of our service structure?

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on May 11, 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.