



THE GUARDIAN

ISSUE 8 VOLUME 2 JANUARY 2009

The First Step Of Many

I realized I was an addict before I came to my first NA meeting, and I'm sure that this does not make me unique. The insanity of the disease had led me to a ninety day rehab facility, and there I had managed to put together twelve days of total abstinence. I was proud of this, and was sure I could go on without using forever. I truly wanted to stay clean, I was beginning to see that my life would be better if I left the dope alone. The very next day, through a series of strange events, I wound up holding my favorite drug in my hand. I seemed to have no choice, I gave no thought to the consequences of my actions, I could only think about using that substance I held in my hand. And use it I did, I was sitting at a table in the treatment facility using when the counselor walked in, and I was back in jail yet again.

This is what it took for me to see that I was powerless over my addiction. I felt ashamed and embarrassed, I had used up all of the chances to "straighten up" that the court system was going to allow me. I now knew what it felt like to use against my will. I knew that the threat of jail would not keep me clean. If I was ever going to find freedom from active addiction, I would need help. Locking me up away from drugs only kept me clean until I was around them again. What I needed I found when I came to Narcotics Anonymous, "the therapeutic value of one addict helping another".

When I finally surrendered to the fact that I was an addict, and discarded any and all notions that I could manage my drug use, I was taking the first step toward recovery and away from drugs. I began to embrace the spiritual principle of honesty, and only then was I able to stop blaming everyone else for making my life unmanageable. I could no longer use the situations I put myself in as an excuse, if I was in jail it was because I broke the law, not because my probation officer was picking on me. I had to make some painful admissions to myself, I got high, not because I had a less than perfect childhood, but because I wanted to. I never got high by accident. My life was unmanageable because I made bad decisions.

The first year in recovery every step I took was about not using drugs. After being here in this fellowship for a little while I've come to realize a few things about myself. Even though I have not used any drugs for over three years I still must continue to work my steps. When I got here what I needed was to find a new way to live, a way of life that using drugs was not a part of. I was not very good at dealing with life, and I made decisions without checking my motives first. I did not know how to apply spiritual principles to my life. My wants and needs always came first, because I didn't care how my actions affected others lives.

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The First Step Of Many

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I can still be a selfish, self centered, egomaniac, running on self will without a thought in my head about dope. I can still use people to get what I want, I can play the victim, or be the villain. I can be the most unspiritual person in the room, and I can act this way with no drugs in me at all. When I'm running on self will my life becomes very unmanageable, and the only thing I have found that helps is to go to meetings, do service, and work my steps. I have a huge list of defects of character that I'm just now beginning to

address. Getting clean is something I only had to do once, now that my mind is not on "the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more", I have the freedom to work on stepping into that new way to live, and the first step is just one of many.

Thanks for letting me share,

Randy E

"TWENTY THINGS TO REMEMBER"

1. Faith is the ability to not panic.
2. If you worry, you didn't pray. If you prayed, don't worry.
3. As a child of God, prayer is kind of like calling home every day.
4. Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.
5. When we get tangled up in our problems, be still. God wants us to be still so He can untangle the knot.
6. Do the math. Count your blessings.
7. God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.
8. Dear God: I have a problem. It's me.
9. Silence is often misinterpreted, but never misquoted.
10. Laugh every day -- it's like inner jogging.
11. The most important things in your home are the people.
12. Growing old is inevitable, growing up is optional.
13. There is no key to happiness. The

- door is always open. Come on in.
14. A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.
 15. He who dies with the most toys is still just as dead.
 16. We do not remember days but moments. Life moves too fast, so enjoy your precious moments.
 17. Nothing is real to you until you experience it; otherwise it's just hearsay.
 18. It's all right to sit on your 'pity pot' every now and again. Just be sure to flush when you are done.
 19. Surviving and living your life successfully requires courage. The goals and dreams you're seeking require courage and risk-taking. Learn from the turtle, it only makes progress when it sticks out its neck.
 20. Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think of you.

"We have never seen a person relapse who lives the Narcotics Anonymous program."

Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text, page 76

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

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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:

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

(Note: This meeting is held in a correctional facility and is only accessible to those with clearance and approval.)

A Better Understanding Of Tradition One

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity."

Here are some questions that you can use to personally assess your working knowledge of the first tradition:

1. In my group am I a healing, mending, and integrating person or do I create disunity or dissension? What about gossip and taking other members inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion", plunge into an argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive NA remarks such as comparing one group with another or contrasting NA in one place with NA in another?
5. Do I put down some NA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of NA?
6. Am I informed about NA as a whole? Do I support NA in every way I can as a whole, or just in the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of NA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love, while indulging in and secretly justifying behaviors that bristle with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough meetings, or read enough NA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share all of me with NA, the bad and the good? Do I accept, as well as give, help in the fellowship?
11. Have I paid enough attention to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? Pamphlets? Basic Text?
12. Do I understand how any of my actions that cause disunity affect other addicts personal recovery?

We're not saviors, we're not teachers, we're not preachers. We're only people who have recovered our own life, our own sanity, our own health. And this is what we can offer other people.... only an example. I think we get hung up on that sometimes.... Jimmy K.

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.

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.

TRADITION ONE

Y Y S L R J L A O G X M E B N T F A E H	ACTIVE	GROWS	RELAX
U L F K O E B O S V H A P S R O X X A Q	APPLY	HAPPEN	RELIANCE
S P A M I V S R V C Y T L O N E M P V N	AREAS	HEART	RESPECT
P P A V X L E P K I A R F E W E P M B B	BENEFIT	HOPE	SENSE
O A I R I T L N E E N M E Q R E S O O A	BIND	IDEAL	SHARE
U X Z R T V I S R C O G Q V N N R X H C	COMFORT	JOIN	SHOULD
R B B E I H R T A C T S E L O H W V Z T	COMMON	LEAD	SKILLS
G B L K T T X U H E A R T I F C L D G I	CONVENTIONS	LETTERS	SOCIAL
C I R B A F Q S S Q M V T I X I E B E V	DANCES	LIFE	SPEAK
S X L F I E Z R B E Y N S Q F P N R F E	DEPENDS	LONER	SPIRIT
M U L E B N P O S T E I B E E E A D D G	ENSURE	LOVE	SPONSORS
L E F Z A H D S I V Q O V N C F N U F H	EQUALLY	LOVING	STRONG
W A R F O D A N N Z E J D I L N P E E J	FABRIC	MESSAGE	SUFFERS
M G I N E G U O Y R S S R E T I A C B K	FIND	PART	SURVIVAL
L N E C E R C P U L O H W E C A N D N L	FIRST	PHONE	THINK
A O N Q O T S S S C L Z O N T A L O Z L	FRIENDS	PICNICS	TREAT
E R D X S S N W I A J A I U I A I I O N	FUN	POWER	UNITY
D T S R D E Q A U Q E C U L L G E N T N	GOAL	PURPOSE	VITALITY
I S I E S O P R U P S R E Q E D E R N Y	GREATER	RECOVERY	WELFARE
M F Z S W O R G X C V R A R E R C V G B	GROUPS	REGION	WHOLE

By @D

All of the words are taken from Tradition 1 in the "It Works How And Why" pages 125-133

Our clean dates or "NA birthdays" are special events to us, and can be an inspiration to others.

If you would like to see your NA birthday in the Guardian, tell your GSR or Email us at ucaguardian@hotmail.com

NA Birthdays for the month of January

Carl P 1/9/01

Mark H 1/18/04

Matt K 1/4/06

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on Feb. 15, 2009 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.