



THE GUARDIAN

March 2010

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 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.

Ken H.

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Thoughts on the Third Tradition

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 if 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:

2. **make something necessary:** to have something as a necessary precondition

Membership:

1. **being member of something:** the state 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:

1. **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.

In loving service, an addict

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:**

New Way To Live Group
Crossville, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group
Crossville, Tennessee

New Beginnings Group
Oneida, Tennessee
&
Helenwood, Tennessee

Getting Started
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group
Allardt, Tennessee

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 THREE:

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

At our first NA meetings, we are welcomed regardless of our social, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. In sharing the joy and pain of our lives, we get in touch with our common humanity.

We learn to look past the superficial differences that once kept us isolated. Our ability to accept those around us on an equal basis increases.

Practicing the principle of tolerance helps us to live and work in harmony with one another.

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

Read the chapter in It Works; How and Why on the third tradition. Write the answers to the following:

TRADITION THREE:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is a "desire to stop using"?
4. How can we tell if someone has a desire to stop using?
5. What are some of the ways we deny membership to someone? How can we avoid them?
6. What are the rights, privileges and responsibilities of NA membership?
7. Why is this the "only" requirement?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are tolerance, compassion, anonymity, and humility. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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.

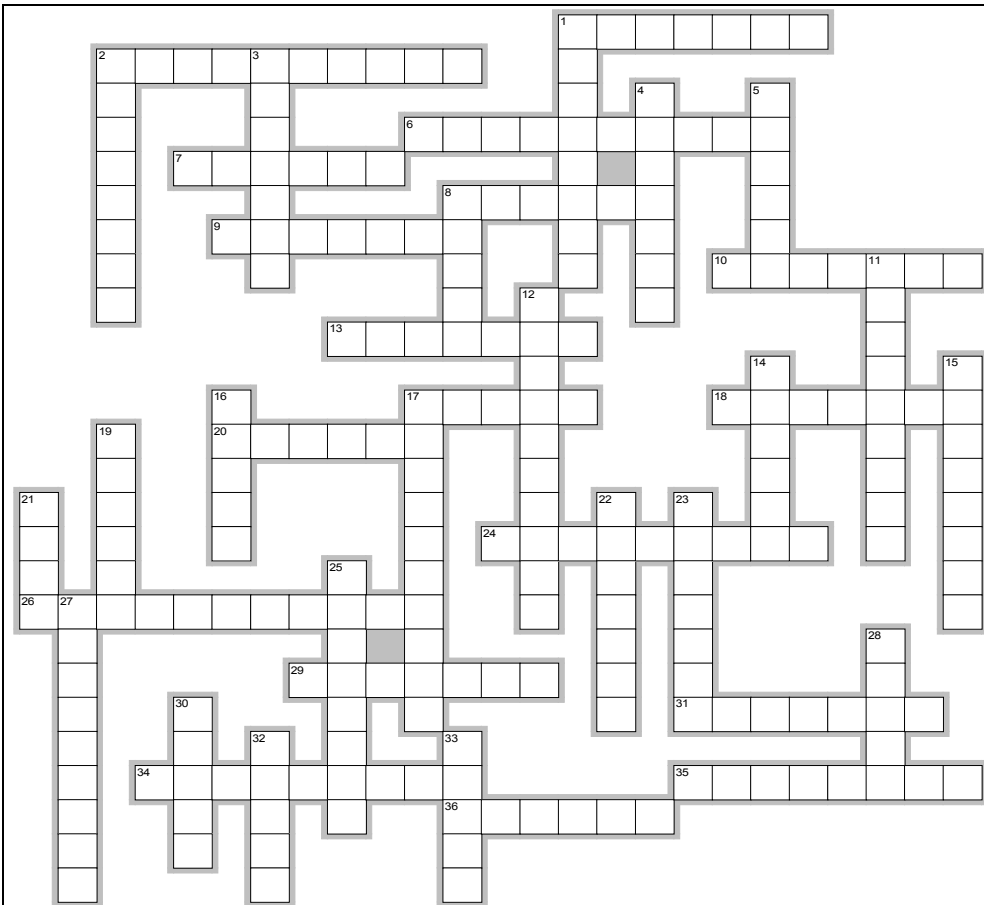
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

Tradition Three "It Works"



Learning to use our literature helps us stay clean, the solutions are always in there.

All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Tradition Three pg 144 - 150

Across

1. "Membership, _____, means more than just being an addict; it means making a decision." pg 147
2. "Some of the _____ that support this tradition include tolerance, compassion, anonymity, and humility." pg 148
6. "While maintaining an emphasis on the importance of total _____, still-using addicts are welcomed into our meetings..." pg 146
7. "_____ is not a measurable commodity." pg 144
8. "We try to make sure that any _____ who attends our meeting is not turned away." pg 145
9. "Pressuring new _____ to talk or act like we do may send them back to the streets." pg 149
10. "We understand that NA is a program of recovery for drug _____." pg 147
13. "Tradition Three spells _____ for the members of NA." pg 150
17. "Our task is to fan the _____ of desire, not dampen it." pg 145
18. "The Third Tradition helps NA grow by encouraging us to _____ others." pg 144
20. "If we identify with what we hear in NA and _____ with the people we meet, we will want what NA offers." pg 148
24. "We are not asked to make _____ about anyone's fitness for recovery." pg 144
26. "Any addict's _____ to come to a meeting ought to be a sufficient indication of desire." pg 146
29. "Our _____ for coming to NA aren't particularly important." pg 146
31. "NA, likewise, cannot _____ any addict who desires to stop using." pg 148
34. "Most of all, we _____ every addict to keep coming back." pg 145
35. We are free to offer welcome instead of _____." pg 145
36. "Each addict should be allowed to decide if NA is the _____ for him or herself." pg 147

Down

1. "_____ reminds us that we are not God..." pg 149
2. "Membership is a _____ decision reached by each individual." pg 145
3. "NA has no _____ of membership and no second-class members." pg 150
4. "Addicts attend their first _____ for many reasons." pg 146
5. "No addict should be _____ an opportunity to stay long enough to develop that desire." pg 147
8. "Tradition Three asks us to set _____ our self-righteousness." pg 149
11. Refusing admission to any addict, even one who comes merely out of _____, may be a death sentence for that addict." pg 148
12. "With that _____, we set ourselves squarely on the road of recovery." pg 148
14. "Others come to a meeting, hear the message, and _____ to active addiction." pg 146
15. "The wording of the Third Tradition _____ the broad focus of our First Step." pg 147
16. "The _____ is not the jury of desire." pg 146
17. "They find that identification in the _____ of recovering addicts in Narcotics Anonymous." pg 147
19. "Our message is broad enough to attract addicts from any _____ class or nationality." pg 144
21. "Many of us _____ when we walk into our first meeting that we're addicts." pg 147
22. "There are no guarantees based on types of drugs used or using _____." pg 145
23. "Addiction is a deadly _____." pg 148
25. "We share an equal right to _____." pg 150
27. "The practice of anonymity ensures the _____ of Tradition Three." pg 150
28. "No one of us can _____ who will stay to recover and who will return to active addiction." pg 145
30. "Compassion _____ kindness to all our efforts in service to others." pg 149
32. "We _____ on the disease of addiction rather than any particular drug." pg 144
33. "We _____ by example." pg 149