



# ***THE GUARDIAN***

DECEMBER 2009

## **LIVING THE STEPS**

*"When we work the program, we live the steps daily. This gives us experience in applying spiritual principles. The experience that we gain with time helps our ongoing recovery. We must use what we learn or we will lose it, no matter how long we have been clean."*

(Basic Text pp. 81-82)

When I first came into Narcotics Anonymous, I was told over and over "Work the steps, work the steps". People shared in meetings about how many times they had worked the steps. I was told that I needed to work the steps as soon as possible. It seemed as if answering the questions and writing all this stuff on paper was going to be the "quick fix" I needed to get my life back in order.

Well, actually I was partially right. First of all, working the steps is vitally important to recovery, and that is not just my opinion. "How It Works" in the Basic Text states: "If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are the principles that made our recovery possible." The steps are indeed an integral part of recovery. After all, that is how I learn to recover.

Secondly, writing the steps down on paper is also a very important part of the process for me. I can think that I'm powerless or that I've surrendered as much as I want to, but once I have the cold, hard facts staring me back in the face in black and white, then that's the time to get honest. Writing it down on paper also allows me to go through the process, whether it's turning over a

character defect or looking at my part in something from my past, so that I can get to where I'm supposed to be.

The steps are not a "quick fix", however. Indeed, there are no "quick fixes" in recovery. Recovery is as fast or slow as I make it, and it is a process. I will never do it perfectly. But, as long as I can say that, today I did it to the best of my ability, then I'm doing okay.

That, then, is the true point when recovery really begins. I work the steps in order to learn how to live the steps, "to practice these principles in all my affairs". "It is only through understanding *and* application that they work." I must first understand the spiritual principles that reside in each and every one of these steps: honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, faith, anonymity, to name just a few. It is only then, once I have begun to understand these principles, that I can begin to implement them in my life. Then I truly begin to live the steps, and not only am I blessed by doing so, but I also become an example for others of what this program can really do.

I must learn to live the steps on a daily basis. My recovery depends on it. Because, as the Basic Text points out, if I don't, I will lose it.

Anonymous

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## The Message Or The Mess

Step Twelve: *"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."* (Basic Text page 48)

A spiritual what? How in the hell is this possible? That's what I thought when I first read this step. But just reading these steps won't ever get us to the elusive "spiritual awakening" we all could benefit from. I don't know about you but I want things to happen fast, like right now! We all have to find a sponsor, and with the help of our sponsor, work our steps, starting at step one. Relief from the pain our addictions inflicted on us, and the pain we brought on ourselves is in these steps, but it does not happen overnight. Our Basic Text tells us, "Our disease involved much more than just using drugs, so our recovery must involve much more than simple abstinence".

So when I get my "spiritual awakening" will I be a NA guru? Will I be special? How will I know? I can't say for sure how it works for others. For this addict, every time I start to think I'm anything other than just another junkie trying to get through the day with using, I end up in a world of shit. I had to learn to use the principle of humility, without it I get myself humiliated. It's in the way we live that we begin to see the awakening of our spirit, and others will see it before we will.

Now the part about carrying this message to addicts, that's the first thing I wanted to do when I saw this step. Everything I did at that time was self centered and self seeking. Until I had worked my way through the steps, trying to find a new way to live, I didn't have a message, I just wanted to look good, look at me carrying the mess!!! For a hard headed addict like me to find a way to stop looking at everyone's defects and start working on mine, I had to work a lot of steps. Thing is, I am not unique, if it works for me, it will work for you.

What about practicing these principles in all our affairs, here's the rub, until we work our steps enough to get to this point, we don't have a lot to offer to the newcomers. I spent a big part of my life being a hypocrite, saying one thing and doing another. In recovery I want to share the great new life this program gives me. If I tell other addicts, "work the steps or die" I need to be working mine. If you have been here for a year or two and have not worked your steps, what kind of a message are you sending out to the newer members? Just a thought.

Joe Addict

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

### **Newsletter Subcommittee**

Vice-chair: Randy E  
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### **Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous**

**Helpline: 866-454-3784**  
**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:**

New Way To Live Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

New Beginnings  
Oneida, 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 Twelve:

*"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions. ever reminding us to place principles before Personalities."*

The most powerful principle we have in countering the symptoms of our disease is anonymity. Anonymity is a guiding force in our spiritual and emotional growth, and in our interactions with others. It enables us to let go of the fears we use to separate and isolate ourselves from other people.

Anonymity is true humility at work in our lives. practicing anonymity helps us realize that, as human beings, we are all the same, sharing the same assets and defects. We can accept our own imperfections and those of others as just part of being human. We stop judging others and accept them for who they are. We set aside personal differences in order to work together.

Anonymity gives us the freedom to truly be ourselves, not a preconceived image of who we ought to be. With this freedom comes a greater interest in helping people in the spirit of selfless service.

Practicing the principles of our tradition helps reinforce what we have learned from working the Steps, giving us the opportunity to gain experience in many aspects of spiritual living.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the twelfth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the twelfth tradition.

Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is the "Principal of Anonymity"?
4. How is anonymity the "Spiritual Foundation of all of our traditions, specifically?
5. Is there a difference between public anonymity and anonymity within NA?
6. Why is it our tendency to focus on personalities? How does this violate anonymity?
7. The spiritual principle of this tradition is anonymity. Define in your own words the spiritual principle in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee will be held on January 17, 2010 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.

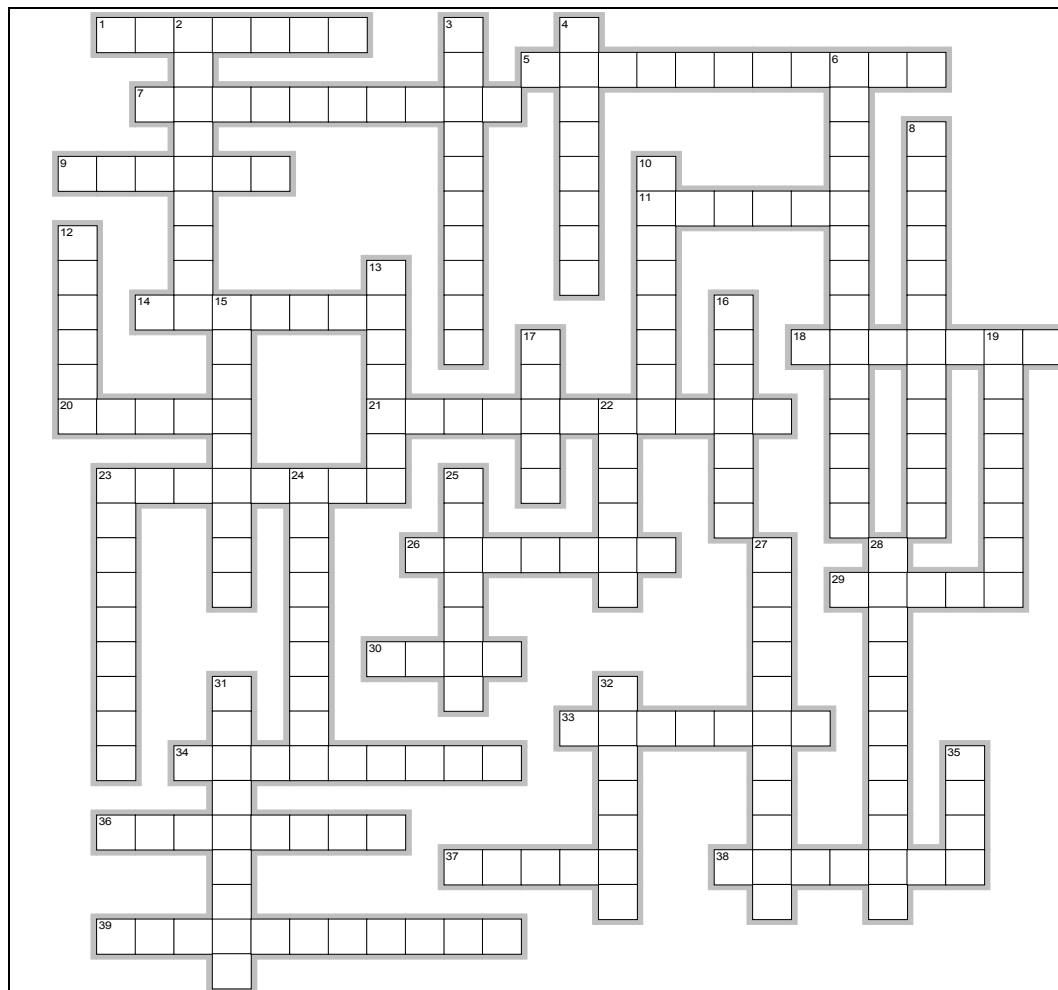
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

Thank you for your support.

## Step Twelve "It Works"



All of the words in the puzzle can be found in  
**"It Works How And Why"**  
 Step Twelve pg 113 – 122

### Across

1. "Is it the hope that an addict, any addict, can recover from the \_\_\_\_\_ of addiction?" pg 118
5. "Once we had engaged in the process of making amends in the Ninth Step, we could see how it \_\_\_\_\_ to our spiritual growth." pg 116
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ we practiced in the Tenth Step ensured that we continued to breathe new life into our awakening spirits." pg 116
9. Every time we tell someone else that Narcotics Anonymous works, we reinforce our \_\_\_\_\_ in the program." pg 118
11. "Our willingness to make \_\_\_\_\_ to them all brought us further away from the grip of self-obsession." pg 116
14. "Step Two allowed us our first \_\_\_\_\_ of hope." pg 114
18. "We developed the ability to feel \_\_\_\_\_ for others." pg 116
20. "Developing a personal \_\_\_\_\_ for carrying the message rests on a simple requirement: We must be ourselves." pg 119
21. "In a sense, Step Twelve \_\_\_\_\_ all the steps." pg 113
23. "Our empathy isn't \_\_\_\_\_, nor is our understanding." pg 121
26. "Whatever form of \_\_\_\_\_ we choose to be involved in, we do so with our primary purpose of carrying the message in mind." pg 118
29. "Now we must ask ourselves, just what is 'the message' we are trying to \_\_\_\_\_?" pg 118
30. "We cannot 'give' someone the results of working the steps, nor can we \_\_\_\_\_ for them." pg 120
33. "The ways in which we carry the message are as varied as our \_\_\_\_\_." pg 119
34. "The \_\_\_\_\_ of unconditional love is expressed in our attitude." pg 120
36. "First and foremost, we share our experience, \_\_\_\_\_, and hope." pg 119
37. "It is on the path paved with these \_\_\_\_\_ that our future journey begins." pg 122
38. "This included the \_\_\_\_\_ we knew we would need to work the Fourth Step." pg 114
39. "Undeniably, we have \_\_\_\_\_ a spiritual awakening." pg 117

### Down

2. Trust and faith, two important elements of a \_\_\_\_\_ awakening, made it possible for us to become entirely ready to allow a Power greater than ourselves to work in our lives." pg 115
3. "One small act of \_\_\_\_\_ can work wonders;" pg 118
4. "\_\_\_\_\_ our attention on our spiritual development brought us to the Eleventh Step." pg 117
6. "Individually and collectively, each step has contributed to the extraordinary \_\_\_\_\_ which we know as a spiritual awakening." pg 113
8. We began to understand that humility and self-loathing are \_\_\_\_\_ and can't exist at the same time." pg 115
10. "Before we admitted the truth about our addiction, we knew only the \_\_\_\_\_ of denial." pg 113
12. "The shaping of \_\_\_\_\_, so essential to our character, was just one of the positive results we found in the Fourth Step." pg 115
13. "That \_\_\_\_\_ was tangible evidence of how much we had changed spiritually." pg 115
15. "Once our \_\_\_\_\_ was completed, we no longer needed convincing." pg 114
16. "Courage and \_\_\_\_\_ have a place in our lives even when we aren't writing an inventory." pg 121
17. "Some of us have a sparkling sense of \_\_\_\_\_ which may reach someone in despair." pg 119
19. "\_\_\_\_\_ is one of these common factors." pg 113
22. Some of us have a remarkable talent for telling the truth, in no uncertain terms, to an \_\_\_\_\_ literally dying to hear it." pg 119
23. While there may be great variations within our experience about this \_\_\_\_\_ of the spirit, we all agree that it results from working the steps." pg 113
24. "Paradoxically, in this \_\_\_\_\_ we found our greatest strength." pg 114
25. Carried along by the promise of continued \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives, we proceeded, in Step Eight, to make ourselves aware of what we had done to others in our active addiction." pg 116
27. "Unlike the admission we made in the First Step, which was made in \_\_\_\_\_, the admission we made in Step Five was voluntary." pg 115
28. "Step Twelve has a \_\_\_\_\_ aspect in that the more we help others, the more we help ourselves." pg 118
31. "Our desire for something different prompted us to a deeper level of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Third Step." pg 114
32. "Narcotics Anonymous is not a \_\_\_\_\_ program." pg 117
35. "Spirituality becomes a way of \_\_\_\_\_ for us as we live by the principles of recovery." pg 121