



THE GUARDIAN

MAY 2009

Why I am not a anda

Nearly four and a half years ago I sat in a treatment center trying to pick up the pieces of my life. I was desperately trying to be open-minded, though not always succeeding. I had a roommate, with a week more clean than me, who strode back and forth, wagging his finger, insisting that if I didn't admit to a dual diagnosis I would surely relapse. "You're an addict and a alcoholic!" he proclaimed. Well, I only used alcohol to come down from coke," I said. "You're an addict and a alcoholic!" "Maybe that's fine for you, but if I don't feel it's true, what am I accomplishing?" "You're an addict and a alcoholic!" "Fine, anything you say." Man you're gonna use if you don't get honest!" "Okay, I'm an addict and an alcoholic."

When I got out, I knew where I felt most at home, and stayed in N.A. meetings. My roommate went through a long string of relapses. I stayed clean. It seemed less important that I adopt an extra label, and more important that I attend an extra meeting. What I did for my recovery became more important than what I called myself. As time passed, I realized that the people who had what I wanted were simply calling themselves "addicts." They didn't put down other fellowships. Instead they just said, "Keep it simple." They told me they were not especially powerless, over specific substances, because they were not using them and were not obsessing

over them. But they were powerless over their addiction, and the drugs had just been the tip of the iceberg. Addiction, I learned, it could cover anything: food, sleep, TV, sex, relationships, work, anger, travel and money, you name it! As an addict I can run with anything. But if I had to work five programs on umpteen diseases, I'd probably want to use!

In the last four years I have had the privilege of traveling and attending N.A. meetings in many places, in many cities where N.A. is still young. I have seen groups struggle with the tyranny of "anda-ism." Some have gone so far as to place in their formats a special request to the effect that, "in our meetings, we identify simply as addicts, and discuss our recovery from the disease of addiction. This is to promote unity and simplicity, and to help the newcomer to better understand and identify with the N.A. message". It seems that only time and patience and the development of solid N.A. recovery are needed to help with this issue. "Anda" may be appropriate for a few people who ran unique and distinct addiction patterns; I don't know. But for most of us, it's just a way for treatment centers to hedge their bets, and for addicts to sit on the fence and avoid making a commitment to N.A. and their own recovery.

Reprinted from the April NA Purest

In This Issue:

Page 1

Why I Am Not A Anda

Page 2

Tradition Five Keeps Us Alive

Page 3

Nothing to Fear

Birthdays

Page 4

Step Five Crossword Puzzle

Tradition Five Keeps Us Alive

*"Each group has but one primary purpose -
to carry the message to the addict who still suffers"*
Tradition Five

I remember well the first time I read this tradition, it was in a meeting and I only had a few days clean. I couldn't understand this primary purpose, I was at that meeting because I had tried everything else; medicine, religion, and psychiatry. My primary purpose was to stay clean, I had no message. I felt as though I had nothing to share with another addict.

I came to NA with a big load of garbage, and I carried my garbage with me to recovery meetings, group business meetings, area service, and I was quick to share my garbage when it was time to make decisions that could affect the atmosphere of recovery in our rooms. I wanted to know why our group didn't sponsor dinners and dances, and why don't we buy birthday cakes with basket money and devote some meetings to anniversary celebrations. If I could have my way we would have a lot of fun. I thought I knew what was missing and that I had all the answers. Sounds a lot like active addiction, doesn't it?

Thank God I had addicts around me who studied our traditions and had seen what happens when they are not followed. My sponsor suggested that I started attending a tradition study in our area, and it was there that I learned more about what this vital tradition is trying to teach me. I began to see that our groups are not addicted but they can still suffer

from the disease of addiction, because we bring it to the rooms with us. I found out that our traditions are there to protect us from ourselves. My suggestions were never meant to hurt anyone, I only wanted to help. What if I had convinced my home group to involve ourselves in activities? We could have easily become distracted from carrying the message of recovery, dancing and eating cake, congratulating each other on our clean time, while the newcomer walked out of the rooms and died. Don't get me wrong here, I'm not some NA Nazi that hates to have fun. I think we need to have more activities so our families can join us and our NA friends in some good clean fun. Our Area Service Committees need to organize these events so our groups are free to concentrate on providing NA's most important service, carrying the message of recovery.

I have learned that its not so important how many white key tags we give out. It matters more how many addicts stick around to pick up a one year tag, and involve themselves in service. I knew how to dance and eat cake before I came to NA, I knew a lot about partying, what I knew nearly killed me because I had never heard about spiritual principles and how to apply them in my life. Thanks NA for having a message of hope in the rooms when I showed up.

Joe 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:

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

* Free And Clean Group
Pikeville, Tennessee

* This meeting is held in a correctional facility and is only accessible to those with clearance and approval.

Nothing to Fear

I'm one of those addicts who puts things off, you know, a procrastinator. I sat on my forth step for a while, I used every excuse in the book for not going on to the fifth step. I wanted to make sure that I hadn't missed anything, my sponsor is just so busy, I had to work late again...

I had no reason to be afraid but I still was, hell I was scared to death. I did not want to share my forth step with anyone. Looking back on it I can admit the truth about what was really going on.

I was frightened of the truth, I knew I would have to get real, I was going to have to look at the exact nature of my wrongs, and I would be admitting

these wrongs to myself, God , and another human being. What if I was rejected, or shunned after these admissions? What would my life be like when my true nature was laid bare?

Was I rejected? No, but I did build a stronger relationship with my sponsor, and the God of my understanding. The answer to these questions is freedom, I now have the freedom to recover, I can go on to the sixth and seventh steps, asking God to help me change my nature. I'm free to make my amends in the ninth step, because I am no longer hiding anything, and I have nothing to fear.

Randy E.

Our clean dates or "NA birthdays" are very 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 May

Stephanie V. 5/14/08

Dan S. 5/20/05

Bob D. 5/1/05

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee will be held on June 21, 2009 At 2:30 pm CST in Crossville, Tennessee at the Crossville NA facility. We are always in need of addicts 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.

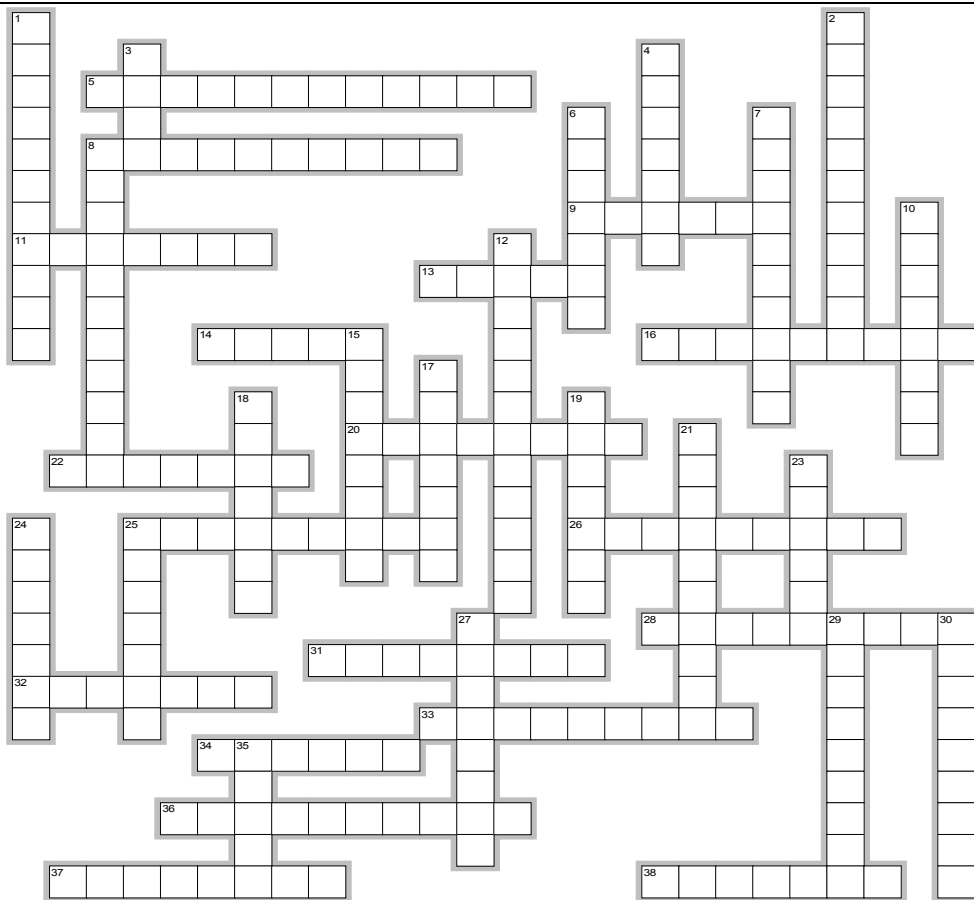
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

Thank you for your support.

Step Five "It Works"



All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Step Five pg 49 - 58

Across

5. "The positive _____ we are building with a Higher Power carries over into our relationships with others as well." pg 54

8. "Praying with the person hearing our Fifth Step can be a _____ intimate experience." pg 53

9. "We start to realize that there is a difference between our actions and the exact _____ of our wrongs." pg 54

11. "Through working the Fifth Step, we find that few of our _____ deserve exaggerated attention." pg 51

13. "Our self-esteem increases as we realize that what we have to _____ is worth such close attention." pg 54

14. "Our belief and our _____ grew as a result." pg 57

16. "The _____ we are about to make to ourselves in Step Five is especially important." pg 50

20. "It is very important that we resist such _____." pg 56

22. "We may call our _____ for reassurance." pg 49

25. "The exact nature of those wrongs is our _____ defects." pg 57

26. "Now that we have completed our written _____, it is essential that we share it promptly." pg 49

28. "That decision, like most _____ we make, must be followed with action." pg 50

31. "We may be surprised at the closeness that _____ between us and our sponsor" pg 56

32. "This process could be thought of as "_____ of the spirit." pg 56

33. "As we share our inventory, our sponsor will _____ share some of his or her own experience with us." pg 55

34. "Our relationships begin to _____ after this step, including the one we have with the God of our understanding." pg 57

36. "We reaffirm our _____ to recovery by immediately working Step Five." pg 49

37. "We've dropped our masks in the _____ of another person." pg 56

38. "We've risked trusting one person with our _____ and our feelings, and we haven't been rejected." pg 57

Down

1. "After working our Fifth Step, we may feel a little raw or _____ vulnerable." pg 56

2. "We take our _____ a step further, thereby renewing the decision we made in Step Three." pg 50

3. "This _____ is only natural." pg 49

4. "We've seen the whole spectrum of our _____ and are ready for something new." pg 58

6. "Our self-obsession _____ us to this, making us feel unique." pg 55

7. "After all, who can better understand what we are _____ than those who have done it for themselves?" pg 52

8. "We may be surprised by the intensity of the _____ we are developing with our sponsor as we share our inventory." pg 54

10. "As we share our most _____ feelings and our most carefully guarded secrets, we may experience anguish." pg 51

12. "The nature of these wrongs is the dishonesty and _____ we were demonstrating each time we lied." pg 55

15. "We gain a new understanding of the principle of _____ as we work this step." pg 51

17. "We will need _____ and understanding to

cope with our feelings." pg 52

18. "Because this is a spiritual _____, and our whole purpose is to awaken spiritually." pg 53

19. "The first thing we must _____ is that the Fifth Step is not a quick fix for a painful situation." pg 52

21. "Such people can share with us their _____ and the solutions they have found through working this step." pg 52

23. "We start to realize that there is a difference between our actions and the exact nature of our _____." pg 54

24. "To invite God into this _____, we may want to say a prayer." pg 53

25. "Another action which requires _____ is our admission to ourselves." pg 51

27. "We are _____ someone entry to those places we've never before opened to another person." pg 55

29. "Why is it so _____ that we also make our admission to God?" pg 53

30. "Our understanding of the _____ principles we have practiced in the first four steps will be enhanced by working the Fifth Step." pg 50

35. "We're _____ beings, nothing more, nothing less." pg 55