



# THE GUARDIAN

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## THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF STEP 9

The most important part of any step I work is applying the spiritual principles in my life. I have found that there is a great difference between writing out my step work and actually working the steps. For me, working the steps means that I am integrating the spiritual principles of this program in all my affairs. The 9th step focuses on humility, love, and forgiveness. To get the absolute most out of this step I must understand what these spiritual principals mean.

Humility comes from accepting responsibility for the harm I caused others and also from accepting responsibility for making it right. When I first read this in the step working guide I thought that "making it right" meant making everything better- just making all the negative feelings go away. I wondered how in the world I was going to make everybody feel better about me! I quickly learned that making things right means changing me! I can't change how others feel about me, but I sure can change how I feel about myself by changing my actions. Through working step nine I can see on a much deeper level how much I hurt those around me, not just how they hurt me... What a change! By practicing humility I remind myself that I am not the most important person. I am no more and no less than you.

What about Love? Before I came into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous I had a really messed up view of love. I didn't really know what real love was. I mixed love up with things like sex, attention, gifts, affection, lust, obsession... the list goes on. I was shocked to

find out that I could actually dislike somebody and still show them love. Part of love is thinking less of me and more of you. When I practice love I am considerate and have mercy on others. How are my actions going to affect you? What can I do for others today? How can I help my fellow addict? If I expect unconditional love from others, then I sure better practice giving unconditional love too.

Last, but not least, forgiveness. I had questions and hesitations when it came to this. How do I forgive people I am still angry at? I still enjoy hating this person! What if I am still getting something out of judging others faults? This program has shown me that the more I experience being forgiven (and believe me, you stay in recovery you are bound to experience that beautiful gift) the more I want to forgive others. Today I can recognize we are all human and we all mess up from time to time. Knowing this gives me great capacity to forgive others and not be as harsh and critical as I once was. I have experienced firsthand that holding resentments only robs me of the serenity that I have come to cherish, so, nine times out of ten, I choose to forgive.

Many people feel a great sense of relief after working their 9th step. I need to remember that I can only keep that freedom by practicing the spiritual principals step 9 taught me.

KBK

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## Step Nine

We describe this step as an 'Action step' verses the processing and personal growth one might experience working steps 2 or 6. Many addicts seem to have a surprisingly hard time with relatively simple acts of choosing one way of life over another. While it's true that a lot of addicts avoid working step nine due to the threat to the ego it seems to promise, it is also true that a good support system, including an experienced sponsor, can make working step nine one of the most powerful healing tools we have at hand.

The "others" sited in the step happen to include ourselves. An engaged sponsor can help an addict choose the prime moment or individual whose amends would be most welcome and healing. There is no shame in declining an opportunity to make amends to a badly hurt individual from the wreckage of our past if to do so might re-injure everybody involved. My first sponsor told me that the very act of recovering is an act of amends that is universally appreciated. It is also a wonderful way to move through your life while waiting for God to give you an opportunity to work this vital step. It works if you work it.

M.G.

**STEP 9** – *“We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”*

Timing is an essential part of this step. We should make amends when the first opportunity presents itself, except when to do so will cause more harm. Sometimes we cannot actually make the amends; it is neither possible nor practical. In some cases, amends may be beyond our means. We have found that willingness can serve in the place of action where we are unable to contact the person we have harmed. However, we should never fail to contact anyone because of embarrassment, fear or procrastination.

In some old relationships, an unresolved conflict may still exist. We do our part to resolve old conflicts by making our amends. We want to step away from further antagonisms and ongoing resentments. In many instances we can only go to the person and humbly ask for understanding of past wrongs. Sometimes this will be a joyous occasion when some old friend or relative proves very willing to let go of their bitterness. To go to someone who is hurting from the burn of our misdeeds can be dangerous. Indirect amends may be necessary where direct ones would be unsafe or endanger other people. We can only make our amends to the best of our ability. We try to remember that when we make amends, we are doing it for ourselves. Instead of feeling guilty and remorseful, we feel relieved about our past.

- *Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text*

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

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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:**

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.)

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## Tradition Nine

*"NA, as such ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."*

Because the Ninth Tradition empowers the groups to establish a service structure-not a simple thing-many of us think of Tradition Nine as being very complex. In reality, the spiritual principles underlying this tradition are very simple. The Ninth Tradition focuses, first, not on the relationship between groups and service committees but on NA, as such. We are a fellowship of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean, nothing more.

Whenever possible, organized service work should be kept distinct from the groups so that they can remain free to simply and directly fulfill our primary purpose, addict to addict. The boards and committees we do organize, we organize on the basis of need only, using the simplest guidelines possible. We organize them solely to serve us, not to establish a complex governing bureaucracy. The Ninth Tradition is far from complicated; in fact, it speaks throughout of simplicity.

In the same way, Tradition nine speaks of anonymity. When the Ninth Tradition exhorts NA, as such, never to become organized, it is telling us that we ought not create a governing hierarchy, a top-down bureaucracy dictating to our groups and members. As we noted in the Second Tradition, our leaders are not governors but trusted servants taking their directions from the collective conscience of those they serve. Our primary purpose, not the personalities of our trusted servants, is what defines NA, as such. To reinforce the anonymity of Tradition Nine, our groups, service boards, and committees practice various systems of rotating leadership so that no one personality ever dominates.

Prudence is one of the guiding principles behind the Ninth Tradition relationship between the groups and the boards or committees that serve them. Groups are responsible to consider their needs carefully, planning prudently before they create boards or committees. There is nothing that will complicate the simplicity of NA, as such, more than a needlessly elaborate array of committees, boards, and subcommittees.

*It Works How And Why*

### **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.

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.

## STEP NINE

K O H T G T E S P A L E R C Z C N W F N  
 I J Z Q P A A Z C S C S S E R G O R P W  
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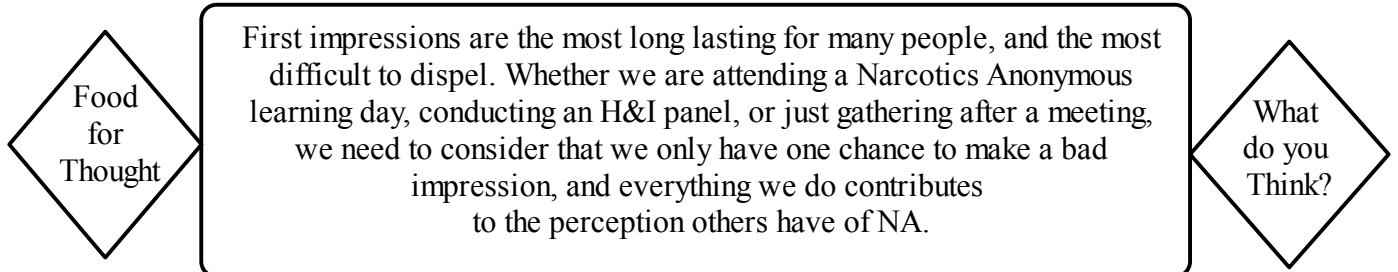
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 STAY  
 STEP  
 THREAT  
 TIMING  
 UNSAFE  
 WANT  
 WHEREVER  
 WRONGS

By @D

All of the words are taken from Step 9 in the Basic Text pages 39-40



The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on Oct. 19, 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.