



Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

# The Guardian

Issue 10 Volume 1 October 2006

## LETTING GO OF MY DEFECTS

"When we see how our defects exist in our lives and accept them, we can let go of them and get on with our new life." - Basic Text p. 33-34

Does it sound strange to be told that we need to accept our defects in order to recover? Does that mean that it's okay to continue acting out on character defects, even in recovery?

It does not mean any such thing. What it does mean is that, in order for me to quit acting out on my defects and be able to recover, I need to accept my defects for what they are.

In active addiction, I didn't even know that I had defects. My character defects were

actually my assets, because they were what enabled me to survive.

Then, when I came into the program of Narcotics Anonymous, you told me about character defects and how they would continue to rule my life until I asked God to take them away.

So, wanting recovery, I made a list of my character defects and asked they be removed from my life. But exactly how honest was I? Why is it that defects I thought I had gotten rid of long ago still pop up on a fairly regular basis? Did I get rid of them or not?

Well, let's look at that quote a little closer: "Once we see how our defects exist in our lives and accept them ...". You remember how we are told to "practice these

principles in all our affairs"? Well, the same was true of our defects in active addiction. We practiced them in all our affairs.

Now that I'm in recovery, I have to be careful when it comes to asking to have my defects removed, or else I will only ask for a certain aspect of a defect that's causing me pain at the moment to be removed.

For instance, do I really want to quit lashing out in anger, or do I just want to quit doing it at work so my boss won't fire me?

If I want to grow in my recovery, then I need to quit acting out on all my defects all the time and grow past them.

- Ken H.

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## TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Does it really annoy you when you try to tell a fellow recovering addict that something they are doing is wrong, and they simply respond with a smug “I can do what I want to. I have choices today”?

Well, guess what? They’re right. As recovering addicts, we all have choices today. We can choose to recover at the speed we choose, we can be involved with the program as much or as little as we choose to be, and we can be as sick as we want to be.

Do you happen to remember the old game show “Truth or Consequences”? Well, in recovery we have our own version, only it’s not a game. It’s reality. In our version, however, the prize is much greater than

money or a new car. It’s life or death.

You see, in recovery we have two choices: act with truth, or face the consequences. So how do I “act with truth”? By admitting I’m an addict, behaving like I’m powerless, allowing my Higher Power to guide my life and showing integrity in everything I do.

That’s how I act with truth. By living my life in such a way that I allow recovery to take hold in my life. If I claim recovery but I still live in sickness, then there’s no truth in my actions.

So what’s the consequences? Well, that’s the flip side of the coin. What’s behind door number two. You see, I can recover as much or as little as I choose to. The choice is mine.

But I have to remember that for every choice I make, there is a consequence.

If I choose to do the right things for the right reasons, the consequences will be recovery, serenity and a life I can be happy with. If I choose to act out on sick behaviors, the consequences will be chaos, discontent, and eventually, relapse and possibly even death.

So, if anybody ever tells you that you can’t act a certain way, tell them they are wrong. You can act any way you want to. Just tell them that you are playing “Truth or Consequences” and, if you are able to survive the game and make it back, then you might be willing to act with truth and start recovering.

- Anonymous

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

### Newsletter Subcommittee

Vice-chair: Ken H.

Email: ucaguardian@hotmail.com

**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:

Crossville NA Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

Daily Reprieve  
Wartburg, Tennessee

Freedom Group  
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere Group  
Albany, Kentucky

Primary Purpose Group  
Smithville, Tennessee

Unity Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

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“We have found a way out, and we see it work for others.” - Basic Text p.103

## FUN IN RECOVERY?

Why does it seem at times that we recovering addicts tend to feel guilty at the prospect of having fun? Anytime an event is discussed that's just designed to allow us to let our hair down and enjoy ourselves in a clean, safe environment, there are those who start ranting and raving about it as if it's a "sin" to have fun. (But that couldn't be it, could it? Because this is a spiritual, not a religious program.)

When I first came into recovery, I loved the

activities, because it gave me a chance to interact with other recovering addicts in a more relaxed atmosphere. Later, I "saw the light" and started staying away from anything that even remotely resembled fun.

Today, once again, I think differently on the matter. I came into recovery to find a new way to live, not be a monk hid away in a monastery somewhere, trying to protect myself from the "evil outside world".

So what does the literature say about

having fun? *A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous* states that "Dances, picnics, campouts, special speaker meetings - these events are put on by area activities subcommittees. Activities like these can provide a greater sense of community for the local NA Fellowship ...." (p. 55)

So let's get the service committees up and running, get the groups focused on carrying the message, then have some fun!

- Anonymous

## We Need Your Help!

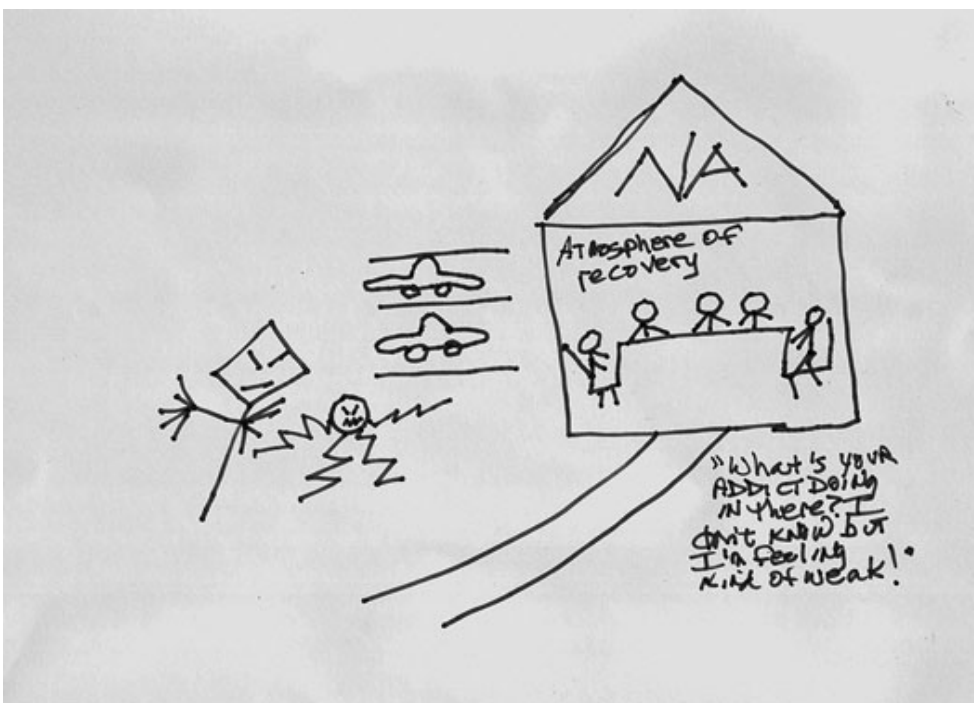
We need your help. The Guardian is in need of submissions. It can be a personal story of how you used the Fellowship or your Higher Power to get through a tough time, your views on a particular quote from the Narcotics Anonymous literature that you happen to like, or a simple expression of gratitude.

Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be more than 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 is 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 166 Tami Kay Rd Dowelltown, Tenn 37059, or emailed to [ucaguardian@hotmail.com](mailto:ucaguardian@hotmail.com).

Thank you for your help and support.



## SELF-CONQUERING THOUGHT PATTERNS

Recovery can seem very frightening at first when you are just starting to live it. In defense, your mind may go into "defeat mode". This will then leave you susceptible to the following self-conquering thought patterns:

### 1.) All Or Nothing Thinking.

It's either a good or bad day. A single bad day decides who you are or are capable of. For example: "I lost my temper today, so I'm not going to get this recovery stuff." Just remember that who you are isn't defined by how your day goes. As long as you are human, perfection isn't an option, so you will have some good days, and some bad days. Just roll with it, and don't let a few bad days shake your recovery.

### 2.) Seeing Only Dark Clouds.

Failure lurks around every corner and comes to be expected. For instance, a single negative aspect, piece of criticism, or passing remark becomes a life-changing catastrophe. If you look for reasons to think of yourself as a failure, you will find them. You will begin to question everything

you do and everything others say, and soon you will find your faith completely gone.

### 3.) Magnification Of Negative Events and Minimization Of Positive Ones.

Good things don't count as much as bad ones. For example: "I know I was able to get through the loss of a loved one without using, but then I got angry with my spouse, so maybe I'm not all that spiritual after all." As with number one, one negative action doesn't define who you are. It only makes you human.

### 4.) Total Acceptance Of Feelings As Truth.

How you feel about yourself defines who you are. For example: "I feel worthless, so it must be true." Feelings are usually emotionally based and have no basis in fact. You can feel full of confidence or like a failure on any given day. Your recovery is not dependant on how you feel on a day-to-day basis.

### 5.) Overemphasis On "Should" Statements.

"Should" statements are frequently perfectionist and reflective of others' standards instead of expressive of your own

needs and desires. "Should" statements are normally used after the fact to reiterate to yourself what you did wrong and are designed only to break down your confidence. A friend of mine calls this "shoulding" on yourself.

### 6.) Labeling.

Labeling is a simplistic procedure and normally expresses a sense of blame. For example: "I am a loser and it's all my fault." By sticking a label on yourself, you are telling everybody "This is who I am" so that they will think of you in the same way and, thus, re-enforce your low perception of yourself and steal your confidence. You should define yourself by your character, not a label.

### 7.) Difficulty Accepting Compliments.

Justifying your own low self-esteem by rejecting the opposite opinions of others. Sometimes it's okay to accept a compliment with a simple "thank you" and go on. Now that you are aware of what the self-defeating thought patterns are, avoid them at all costs because they will rob you of your desire to recover.

- Anonymous

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The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on November 19 2006 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.