



Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

The Guardian

Issue 9 Volume 1 September 2006

COMMON GROUND

"Our personal stories may vary in individual pattern, but in the end we all have the same thing in common." - Basic Text p. 84

As a newcomer, did you hesitate to share about yourself in meetings because you hadn't done all those "good things" in active addiction that others shared they had done?

Have you ever sat in a speaker meeting, enthralled by the tale the speaker was weaving about him or herself, and felt a twinge of jealousy because you didn't have prison time, near death experiences or other "speaker meeting-worthy" subjects to share about?

In active addiction, many of us felt a need to

"prove" ourselves or appear to be "more incorrigible" than everybody else.

Often, we lied about ourselves in order to appear worse than we really were. The more "battle scars" you had, it seemed at times, the bigger you felt and the more everyone else looked up to you.

When we walked into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, we didn't leave that addict behavior at the door. It came in with us. We still may have felt the need to prove ourselves, feeling that the worse we behaved in active addiction, the more accepted we would be in NA, and the more deserving we would be of recovery.

The truth is, however, that the common ground

we all share is addiction and recovery. And when you speak, all I need to hear about is the nature of your disease and the rewards of your recovery. Everything else doesn't matter.

All those war stories that prove how bad you are, are beside the point. You have nothing to prove today. You are no better or worse than me. The things you had to do to get to NA don't matter. Your recovery does not have to be validated.

Just share your story. When you hit your bottom, how you found NA, what you did to start recovering. That's what I need to hear. That's what I can relate to. That's what just might save my life.

- Ken H.

In This Issue:

Common Ground
page 1

Changing My Habits
page 2

Don't Compare,
Identify
page 3

The Primary
Purpose Of An NA
Group
page 3

Are You Ready For
The Area Inventory?
page 4

CHANGING MY HABITS

Are you new in the program, just trying to stay clean on a daily basis? Or maybe you have a character defect you're still acting out on. Whatever the case may be, we recovering addicts are always in a state of progress, always working on something that is keeping us from being connected to our Higher Power and the Fellowship the way we would like to be.

What I need to do is not let whatever it is I'm working on kick my ass. I need to remember that to everything there is simplicity, until I get in there and complicate the heck out of it.

I need to remember that there is one simple solution to all my problems. Quit doing what I'm doing that causes me pain. Okay, it may not be as simple as that but it is pretty simple.

For instance, if I don't do drugs, I won't get high. If I don't act out on my anger, I won't have an amends to make later. Pretty simple, huh? So how do I keep from doing those things? It's all about habits.

As human beings, we are creatures of habit. I do things automatically because I have done them routinely for a period of time. Using drugs and all my other character defects are the same. I didn't start out using all the time. I worked my way up to it until it became habit.

And the only way to break a habit is to pick up a new one. As my routines change, my lifestyle changes. Bad habits are replaced by good habits. Using, acting out on my anger and trying to control others are replaced by talking to my sponsor, going to meetings and working steps.

Once these good things become habit, my old way of living will seem strange and alien to me. I will no longer want to live in the chaos that I used to live in. But in order to start doing something different, I have to do something different.

That's what the literature is talking about when it mentions "find a new way to live". How do I find a new way to live? By doing what is suggested to me by others who have done it. Sure it seems strange, silly and awkward at first. Using did too, in the beginning. But by doing these new things on a routine basis, they become habit. Then they become natural. Then, before I know it, I have found a new way to live.

Just remember, all habits aren't bad. I just have to work on having good habits today.

- 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

New Beginnings
Huntsville, Tennessee

Primary Purpose Group
Smithville, Tennessee

Unity Group
Crossville, Tennessee

DON'T COMPARE, IDENTIFY

Have you ever attended a meeting - or talked with other members in the Fellowship - and said to yourself, "I never did that"? Or maybe you feel that you didn't belong because you didn't feel that you suffered as much as one or more of those people? Well, maybe you haven't ... YET!

Just because you may not share the same bad experiences as someone else does not mean that you do not belong. The simple fact that your disease has led you into the rooms for recovery from addiction is proof enough of your time spent

in misery, as well as your desire to change for the better. Just because someone else's brand of hell seems worse than yours doesn't mean that you haven't lived through enough pain and suffering; hell is hell no matter what form it takes in anyone's life.

Any time you feel that you haven't suffered enough, or even worse - that your life in active addiction wasn't that bad because someone else had it worse than you, that's your disease lying to you. It wants you back under its control. Your addiction is hungry and only you can feed it.

Now, today, when these thoughts arise, talk to your sponsor or a friend in the Fellowship.

Let them know how you feel. They can help you discover that you DO belong, and that you need not suffer any further. In this discussion, don't compare yourself to others, but identify with their painful experiences. Feel the strength and hope in their voice. Realize that your past acts aren't as important as your present behaviors in your daily journey of recovery. Remember, WE are all in this together.

- If my disease starts lying to me today, will I do myself a BIG favor and talk with another member in the Fellowship?

- Submitted by
Joe A.,
a grateful
recovering addict in
Central PA

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF AN NA GROUP

The primary purpose of an NA group is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The

group provides each member with the opportunity to share and to hear the experience of other addicts who are learning to live a better way of life without the use of drugs. The group is the primary vehicle by which our message is

carried. It provides a setting in which a newcomer can identify with recovering addicts and find an atmosphere of recovery.

- (From A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous p.25)

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.

Thank you for your help and support.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE AREA INVENTORY?

The Third Annual Upper Cumberland Area Inventory will be held October 14 at the Crossville NA meeting house in Crossville, Tennessee. There may be some members of this Area who aren't sure what an Area inventory is or what their role in it will be, so below we have answered some of the more common questions concerning the inventory.

Q: What exactly is an Area inventory?

A: Some area committees set aside one day each year for conducting an area service inventory. Why? For much the same reason as NA members do personal inventories: to stop, consider their actions and attitudes, and rededicate themselves to their ideals. (From A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous pp. 58 - 59.)

Q: Who can participate in the inventory?

Just like with any NA meeting, any member of NA can attend

an Area inventory as a spectator, and share their own experience, if invited to.

However, it is strongly recommended that any members of the Area attend the inventory. After all, it is your Area and the services are being provided on your behalf. It is also strongly recommended that all GSRs and service committee members attend the inventory, so they can help in deciding what's working for the Area and what should be revised.

Q: What will happen during the inventory?

A: The Area inventory considers three general topics:

1. How well has the Area committee done this year at serving the groups, and how can it better serve them in the coming year?
2. How well has the Area committee served the larger community, and how can the committee better serve the community -at-large?
3. How well has the Area committee done at supporting

NA's Regional and World services? How can the Area provide better support for these services?

A substantial amount of preparation is required on everyone's part for an effective Area inventory. GSRs, officers, and subcommittees must take a fearless, searching look at their work over the last year and come to the inventory prepared to review their roles on the committee. GSRs should spend time with their groups considering what needs might be addressed by the Area committee in the next year and come to the inventory ideas with in hand. Officers and subcommittees should take a look at the make-up of the larger community, ask themselves how NA could be more effective in reaching out to that community, and be prepared to share their thoughts with the entire Area committee. And perhaps most importantly, all Area committee participants should make an extra effort to prepare themselves spiritually to make the most of the Area inventory meeting. (From A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous p. 59.)

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on October 15 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.