



# THE GUARDIAN

September 2010

## 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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# Earning Forgiveness

Coming into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous and seeing the steps for the first time, my eye was instantly drawn to that ninth step, you know the one that says I make amends to all of the people I had harmed. I had it all figured out; I admit I'm an addict, say I'm sorry, I can't help it, and all is forgiven. I was in a meeting doing something about my problem, so I wanted everyone to forgive me, right now. That was what I saw when I looked at that step, forgiveness, simple. I failed to see the eight steps in front of that forgiveness I was seeking. But I'm special, I'm an addict, I admit it, forgive me now. That's how I lived my whole life, I wanted what I wanted, when I wanted it, and I expected to get it with little or no effort. Boy, was I in for a surprise!

In the next few weeks I tried to use my new "membership" to get some sympathy out of a few of those people I had harmed. I proudly told them about going to meetings because I now knew I was an addict, and shared with them

how sorry I was for the pain I caused. I got a much different reaction to my admissions than I thought I would. These people then told me that it was about time I tried to grow the f\*!k up, and they already knew how sorry I was, and didn't need me to tell them that. My feelings got hurt, and I lashed out, saying mean and hurtful things. I ended up owing more amends than I did before, maybe I should have taken a look at those first eight steps.

In Narcotics Anonymous the steps are in a specific order for a reason, we can't work only the ones we like, or skip around, in other words, we must surrender completely to the process. I finally gave up the fight, I got a sponsor and started working the steps, with my sponsor's guidance. It has taken awhile, but I have found freedom in the steps, freedom from the self-centeredness that ruled my world for so long, in time maybe I will be forgiven, when I have earned it.

Joe Addict

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## Finding Hope

Back before I came to the NA fellowship I had no faith. I didn't believe in a Higher Power. I thought my way of life was already planned out, I had no hope. It was hard, but I tried over and over to stay clean on my own, it worked for a little while, but never for very long. I was really unhappy.

When I came through the doors of an NA meeting, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. People just like me, drug addicts, but these addicts were clean and happy about it. They made me feel welcome. They treated me like I was someone, not like some strung out

junkie. I started making real friends. People that really cared if I came back. They wanted me to stay clean and were willing to help me do it. It has taken a lot of hard work on my part, a lot of support from the NA fellowship, or may I say my new family, plus a newly found faith in a Power Greater than myself.

The love I've found fills my heart with hope because now I know that with NA and the God of my understanding I can stay clean one day at a time.

An Addict named Jon

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

**Newsletter Subcommittee**  
Vice-chair: Randy E  
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:**

New Way To Live Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

Promise of Hope Group  
Cookeville, Tennessee

New Beginnings Group  
Oneida, Tennessee  
&  
Helenwood, 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 NINE

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

Our growth can be measured by the degree and quality of our interaction with other people. We develop the ability to see how our thoughts and actions contribute to the lives of others. We begin to show up for our families, friends, and employers in way we never could before. We become accountable and directly responsible for our actions.

Assuming direct responsibility as productive members of society; we become more deeply involved within our communities. We may find ourselves taking an interest in, or working for, a social or political cause.

Today, we can support the services provided by our churches, schools, and institutions of government, instead of being just beneficiaries of these services .

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the Ninth Tradition.

Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the Ninth Tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What are "NA", "NA as such", and "NA as a whole" and the "Fellowship of NA"?
4. Is the service structure part of "NA as such"? How does it relate to this tradition?
5. Can we create anything other than service boards or committees? If so, how?
6. Who do our "Service boards and committees" serve?
7. What does direct responsibility mean?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are humility, prudence, fidelity, and responsibility. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definitions from the dictionary.

### 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.

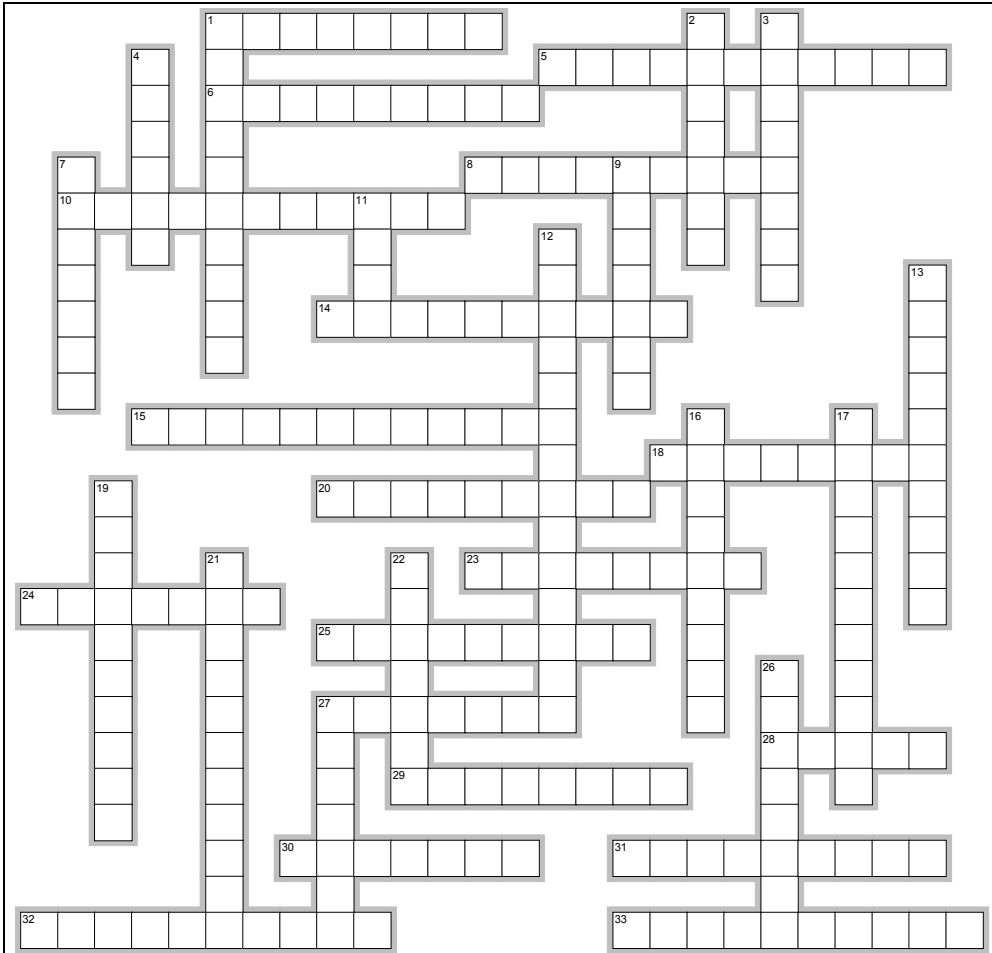
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

# Tradition Nine "It Works"



Learning to use our literature helps us stay clean, the solutions are always in there.

## Across

1. "The groups may ask their committee to buy bulk \_\_\_\_\_ of literature..." pg 191
5. "Through their representatives, groups \_\_\_\_\_ with the boards and committees serving them." pg 192
6. "The groups may ask that public information, hospitals and institutions, and \_\_\_\_\_ programs be set up..." pg 191
8. "Sooner or later, the groups realize the \_\_\_\_\_ they have in this committee of representatives." pg 191
10. "We organize them solely to serve us, not to establish a complex governing \_\_\_\_\_." pg 193
14. "We are a \_\_\_\_\_, not a lobbying organization or a medical service or a chain of treatment facilities." pg 189
15. "The groups might ask their committee to compile a directory for \_\_\_\_\_ at meetings throughout the area..." pg 191
18. "\_\_\_\_\_ is one of the guiding principles behind the Ninth Tradition..." pg 194
20. "From time to time, they may even organize a joint recovery meeting or social activity, gathering the entire NA \_\_\_\_\_ together." pg 191

23. "Groups share information and \_\_\_\_\_ with the boards and committees serving them." pg 192
24. "To answer this question, let's look at how an NA group \_\_\_\_\_." pg 190
25. "In the same way, Tradition Nine speaks of \_\_\_\_\_." pg 193
27. "Our \_\_\_\_\_ purpose, not the personalities of our trusted servants, is what defines NA, as such." pg 193
28. "As the \_\_\_\_\_ grows even larger, it often sprouts new groups." pg 190
29. "Yet for all its \_\_\_\_\_ on keeping things simple, Tradition Nine is not an excuse for dis-organized service work..." pg 189
30. "NA is a nonprofit fellowship or \_\_\_\_\_ of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem." pg 189
31. "In reality, the \_\_\_\_\_ principles underlying this tradition are very simple." pg 193
32. "...the Ninth Tradition suggests that groups organize separate boards and \_\_\_\_\_ to serve their needs." pg 190
33. The boards and committees we do organize, we organize on the basis of need only, using the simplest \_\_\_\_\_ possible." pg 193

All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Tradition Six pg 189 - 195

## Down

1. To maintain the focus of its recovery meetings, the group usually conducts its business meeting \_\_\_\_\_, keeping NA, as such, as simple as possible." pg 190
2. "What are the needs these boards and committees would \_\_\_\_\_?" pg 190
3. "Finally, the Ninth Tradition speaks of \_\_\_\_\_." pg 195
4. "These boards and committees are established to serve only, not to \_\_\_\_\_." pg 194
7. "Each group on its own is somewhat limited in its \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill its primary purpose..." pg 194
9. "We are a fellowship of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean, \_\_\_\_\_ more." pg 193
11. "Together, they become \_\_\_\_\_ to do what they could not do alone." pg 194
12. "The groups' \_\_\_\_\_ does not end with the establishment of a board or committee to fulfill their service needs; in fact, that is only the beginning." pg 194
13. "We are \_\_\_\_\_ addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean." pg 189
16. "Another \_\_\_\_\_ implicit in the Ninth Tradition is the principle of humility." pg 194
17. "This \_\_\_\_\_ helps our boards and committees better understand and serve the needs of the groups." pg 192
19. Our fidelity to the Ninth Tradition assures that the simple, spontaneous \_\_\_\_\_ of recovery shared one addict to another in the NA group is never organized, legislated, or regulated out of existence." pg 195
21. "The point is, the \_\_\_\_\_ of these services is based squarely on the groups' needs." pg 191
22. The groups should also \_\_\_\_\_ continuing guidance to the committee." pg 195
26. "Just as we are nonprofessional but may hire professionals to help us, so we are not organized but may \_\_\_\_\_ boards or committees to serve us." pg 190
27. "Our primary \_\_\_\_\_ is, quite simply, to carry the message." pg 189