



THE GUARDIAN

APRIL 2010

Inventory...What For?

"We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." (Step Four)

"The purpose of a searching and fearless moral inventory is to sort through the confusion and the contradiction of our lives, so that we can find out who we really are. We are starting a new way of life and need to be rid of the burdens and traps that controlled us and prevented our growth."

(Basic Text pg. 27)

I was one of those addicts that had it all figured out...if one substance was causing too many problems...I would just stop using that one for awhile. In my mind, if I could put it down I didn't have a drug problem. I envisioned drug addicts as people using dirty needles. As long as I didn't do that I wasn't really an addict. My problem was simple...I enjoyed using...for awhile. I began to see the negative effects of my using creeping into my life. My long time friends began to avoid me...that just meant I wouldn't have to share. I started having a hard time keeping my job...well good, more time to use. Before long I was a total loss...doing all the things I swore I would never do. I reached a point where I felt like I had to slow down, change my ways. I walked away from the life, determined to get clean. I was sure if I kept using I would surely die. At that time I was sixteen years old, and I was forty before I finally was able to stay clean.

There were many times that I swore off the dope, fed up with the

destruction that prevailed in my world. I went back to school, moved from state to state, even got married. How many times in my past did I get sick of living the life of an addict? Why did I end up right back where I started after trying to leave the insane world I existed in? Was there a pattern to my life? Was it the drugs that caused my problems or was it the problems that caused me to use? These are questions I had often asked myself in my active addiction.

I had plans as a kid, I wanted to have nice things, good jobs, an education. I didn't want to grow up to be a junkie...who does? I kept trying and failing, trying and failing. I finally came to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting and met people just like me...people who had plans for the future but couldn't keep it together...people that wanted nice things but wasted all their resources on drugs. The big difference between me and them was the NA program.

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Inventory...What For?

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They worked steps...they had a sponsor...they were involved in NA service, and their lives were getting better. I was invited to join a fellowship of men and women who understood how I felt. For the first time in my life I was around addicts that didn't want to get all they could from me...these addicts wanted to get all they could from life, and they said they would help me to do the same.

I wanted to live like those addicts at that meeting were living, I wanted to be happy. I kept coming to meetings...I got a sponsor and worked some steps. If I had not stuck around long enough to work the Forth Step I never would have found the answers to those questions that I had asked myself for so long...I never would have been able to see the patterns that kept me from staying clean. Step Four opens the door for us to find freedom from active

addiction. In order to grow enough to work the rest of the steps we must find out what our defects of character are, we have to identify the nature of our wrongs...no one can do this for us, we have to do it ourselves.

After writing down an inventory of my life up to to time I found NA I was able to see what happened each time I tried to straighten my life up. For me it was simple...after awhile I would get bored of the same old stuff and try to find something more interesting. Unfortunately, I react differently than "normal" people do to "interesting" things. When I find something I enjoy I tend to take it to extremes...I can't stop. It was the Forth Step that helped me to begin to understand myself enough to see who I am. Thanks NA.

Joe Addict

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee will be held on May 16, 2010 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're not saviors, we're not teachers, we're not preachers. We're only people who have recovered our own life, our own sanity, our own health. And this is what we can offer other people.... only an example. I think we get hung up on that sometimes.... Jimmy K.

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:

New Way To Live Group
Crossville, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group
Crossville, 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 FOUR

"Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole."

The NA way of life challenges us to take responsibility for our lives. We learn to make our own decisions and accept the consequences. When meeting hardship or disappointment, we choose not to blame anyone else. We make the best of the situation and get on with daily living.

Developing a sense of who we are and what we are about gives us an appreciation of the same process at work in other people. We learn to recognize and respect the boundaries people set for themselves, giving them the freedom to take care of their own lives.

Knowing that today our actions can affect others, we strive to do "the right thing for the right reasons."

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the fourth tradition.

Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the fourth tradition.

Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is autonomy? Why isn't it a license to do anything we want?
4. What sort of things affect "NA as a whole"?
5. How can we use autonomy to further the "primary purpose" of our groups?
6. How can we avoid misusing the "principle of Autonomy"?
7. When does something affect other groups or NA as a whole?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are independence, responsibility, open-mindedness, anonymity, and unity. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition 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.

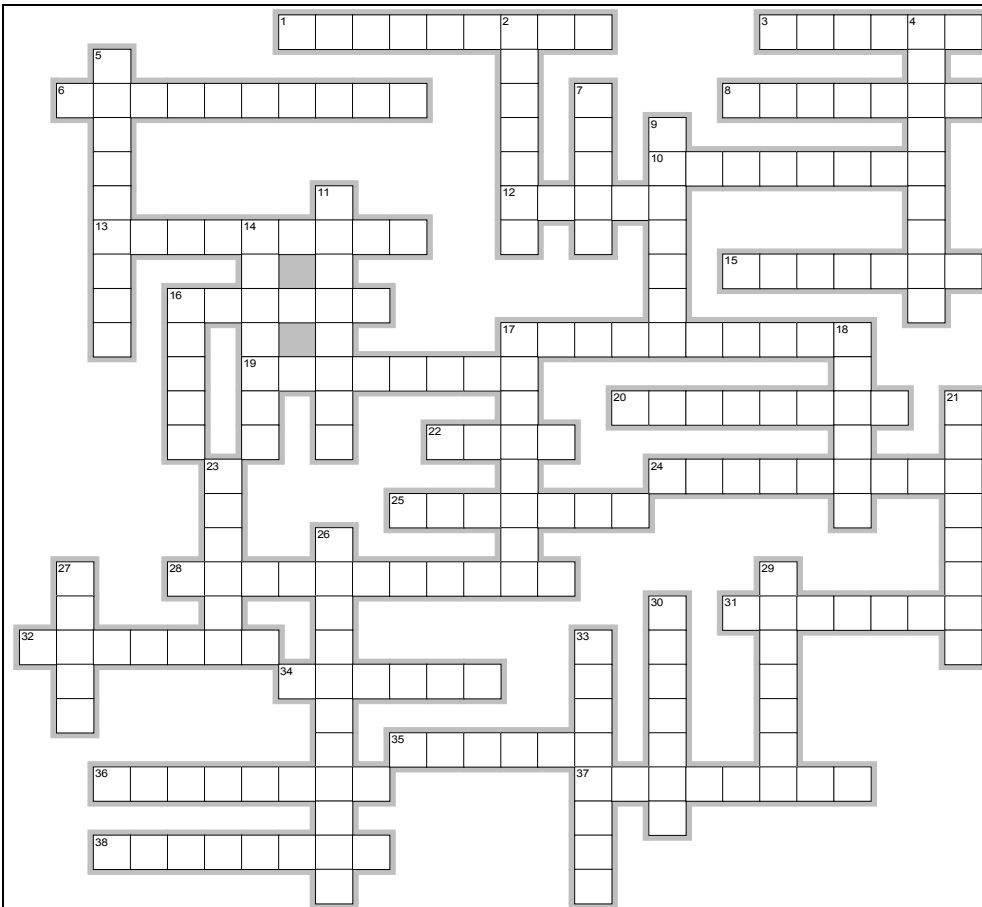
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

Thank you for your support.

Tradition Four "It Works"



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

Across

1. "Open-mindedness is _____ if we are to use autonomy to help NA grow." pg 156
3. "...one type of meeting will not _____ to every addict who comes to Narcotics Anonymous." pg 152
6. "If the public _____ of Narcotics Anonymous is somehow impaired, addicts may die." pg 155
8. "NA groups have a great deal of _____." pg 151
10. "In the spirit of _____, many groups hold meetings that appeal to members with similar needs." pg 153
12. Each group bears an _____ responsibility in the work and in the reputation of NA." pg 157
13. "The members of each group design a _____ for meetings that reflect that particular group's personality." pg 151
15. "Sometimes it's hard to know what _____ NA as a whole." pg 154
16. The Fourth Tradition _____ us away from self-centeredness by giving us the freedom to act responsibly as groups." pg 155
17. "_____ the unity of the NA Fellowship comes first." pg 158
19. "Our _____ of open-mindedness helps us remember that each group is part of a greater whole." pg 156
20. "If our _____ as NA members is still destructive and selfish, we will once again have difficulty meeting openly." pg 155
22. "We are free to make each group the very _____ it can be." pg 152
24. "Our lives in active _____ often seemed more like slavery." pg 151
25. "Any decision that we make as an autonomous group ought to be _____ first in our common welfare." pg 157
28. "Creative freedom challenges the groups to be strong and _____." pg 152
31. "We consider our common _____ when we make decisions in our groups." pg 154
32. "An NA community that offers a _____ of meetings is more likely to reach a broad cross-section of addicts." pg 153
34. "Some meetings will be open to the _____, while others will be for addicts only." pg 153
35. "NA meetings _____ when groups look beyond their immediate needs to offer help to each other." pg 157
36. "It's not difficult to _____ an addict." pg 154
37. "Our NA groups are free to offer _____ to any addict." pg 151
38. "NA groups are _____ for the message of recovery." pg 151

All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Tradition Four pg 151 - 158

Down

2. "While autonomy gives us certain freedoms, it also _____ responsibility..." pg 156
4. "_____ applied to the Fourth Tradition reminds us that each group has an equal place in the Fellowship of NA." pg 157
5. "We should take care to act like good _____, conducting ourselves respectfully." pg 155
7. "...all NA groups are encouraged to keep the _____ of their meetings on recovery from the disease of addiction." pg 153
9. "The Fourth Tradition helps groups achieve a _____ between independence and responsibility." pg 156
11. "Since most groups are not _____ connected with each other, we might think that whatever happens in our meetings has no effect on anyone else." pg 154
14. "Each group has the freedom to pursue our _____ purpose in the manner it feels will work best." pg 152
16. "Every _____ has a niche to fill..." pg 152
17. "Members grow in their _____ recovery when they take responsibility for their lives." pg 152
18. "Healthy, vital groups are essential to the _____ of Narcotics Anonymous." pg 158
21. "It's also important to _____ how we're viewed by society." pg 155
23. "We have an _____ on other groups or NA as a whole if we're not recognizable as an NA meeting." pg 154
26. "Most NA _____ will offer a number of different types of meetings..." pg 153
27. "Through working the steps, we _____ that with freedom comes responsibility." pg 151
29. "It's important to think about the _____ we send to newcomers in our meetings." pg 154
30. "Groups _____ the responsibility and commitment of their members." pg 153
33. As long as a group _____ the Twelve Traditions and espouses the Twelve Steps of NA in its meetings, it may consider them Narcotics Anonymous meetings." pg 153