



THE GUARDIAN

October 2010

Sponsorship

I got clean in 1983, did my steps right away, thoroughly and with a sponsor. I have been surprised in the last 10 years or so of my recovery to find so many people offering others advice and derisive comments about working steps "too fast" whatever the hell that is - the steps and the principles therein apply throughout the entire rest of my life and recovery, they can certainly be worked again (and have been, many times, in my case).

If a sponsor wants a sponsee to work their steps more slowly - that's between them - however, I have had many sponsees jumped on and told they were doing the steps "wrong" by random recovering addicts at meetings because they were working them within their first few months of recovery. It seems there was a big shift in NA regarding step work over the last decade or so with a belief that people can afford to take their time with the steps.

One thing I have noticed is that many people I've met who are new to recovery tend to have a lot of enthusiasm and willingness when they are fresh from using and have that gratitude shining in their entire being. That can be some incredible fuel to motivate someone to do steps - most of them don't really even need the extra push at that point - they want to do them. I would hate to let the opportunity pass. We can always work through the steps again going forward.

One girl in my area showed me a huge binder which contained her fourth step, with index tabs for categories, which she'd been working on for 8 years at that point. She is still clean (over 15 years clean now) so I can't fault her for working her program in a way that benefited her, but I can't imagine suggesting someone take 8 years to work a 4th step. I need to offer my own experience, which is that I have stayed clean over 26 years and I worked the steps immediately, and worked them again and again and again.

When the step guide came out, I started working the steps in the guide, since I thought it might be a useful tool and future sponsees most likely would be hoping to work steps in it. I didn't want to guide them through the guide without having experience with it myself and I didn't want to be close-minded about it if it could be helpful in any way.

A few years ago I didn't have the obligations I have no (work, etc) and would spend hours on each step, in person, with sponsees, using the guide. We worked a lot of them right there together, question by question. It gave them one-on-one time with me, helped us get to know each other more intimately, and as patterns emerged, they were easy to identify because we were working step after step on a regular basis. It took around 3 months doing it that way.

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Keep Our Rooms Safe For The Newcomer

Sometimes I feel very much alone because I love and respect the NA program so much. There are times when I feel like an outsider even in Narcotics Anonymous meetings. It seems, at times, as if there are so many things going on in a meeting that the NA message is almost an afterthought, if it's even thought of at all.

There are those who, even though they are "grateful to be clean" seem just as sick now as they ever thought about being in active addiction. We're told not to take others' inventories, but that's not really necessary when they are very open about the things they are doing. If they don't feel the need to be discreet about their behavior, then I

don't feel the need to keep quiet about how I feel.

Sure, whether you are a recovering addict or not, you have the right to be as sick as you want to be. The only thing I ask is don't bring it into the meetings to spread the poison to others, especially the newcomer.

Give the newcomer a chance to get clean. Give them a chance to hear the message of Narcotics Anonymous. Give them a chance to live. All of us are here today because we were given that chance. Now why would we want to turn around and take it away from someone else?

Sponsorship

(continued from pg 1)

I try to always remember that sponsors are just mere humans and making mistakes is one thing all humans do. Part of my step work process was coming to accept that I have flaws and it is okay to be me, with all the parts that make me who I am part of the whole.

I have had sponsees run around complaining about my lack of availability to others, and my answer is that they could, as I had suggested to them, find sponsors who are more available instead of complaining about

the one they have. I can't be all things to all people (or even all things to one person).

When I sponsor people, knowing my limitations, I encourage them to build strong support groups so they aren't reliant on me for everything that occurs and they can contact any number of people to help them through difficulties when they can't reach me. I am only human and I can't always be there, I can't always be what people wish I was for them. I can just be sincere in my efforts to help and give what time I can.

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

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866-454-3784
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**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 TEN:

"Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

Having no opinion on outside issues protects the NA group from straying from its primary purpose. In our personal lives, we learn that it is okay to say: "I don't know. I have no opinion on that." We don't have to express our opinions on everything. Minding our own business, we refrain from giving unsolicited advice and begin to respect other people's rights to their own opinions.

By practicing the principle of self-restraint, we are better able to keep the focus on our growing self-awareness and developing relationship with a God of our understanding..

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

Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the tenth 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 an outside issue?
4. When does an NA member's opinion get mistaken for NA's opinion?
5. How could NA's name be drawn into public controversy?
6. What effect could being involved in public controversy have on NA?
7. How do we deal with internal controversy?
8. The spiritual principle of this tradition is humility.

Define in your own words the spiritual principal 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.

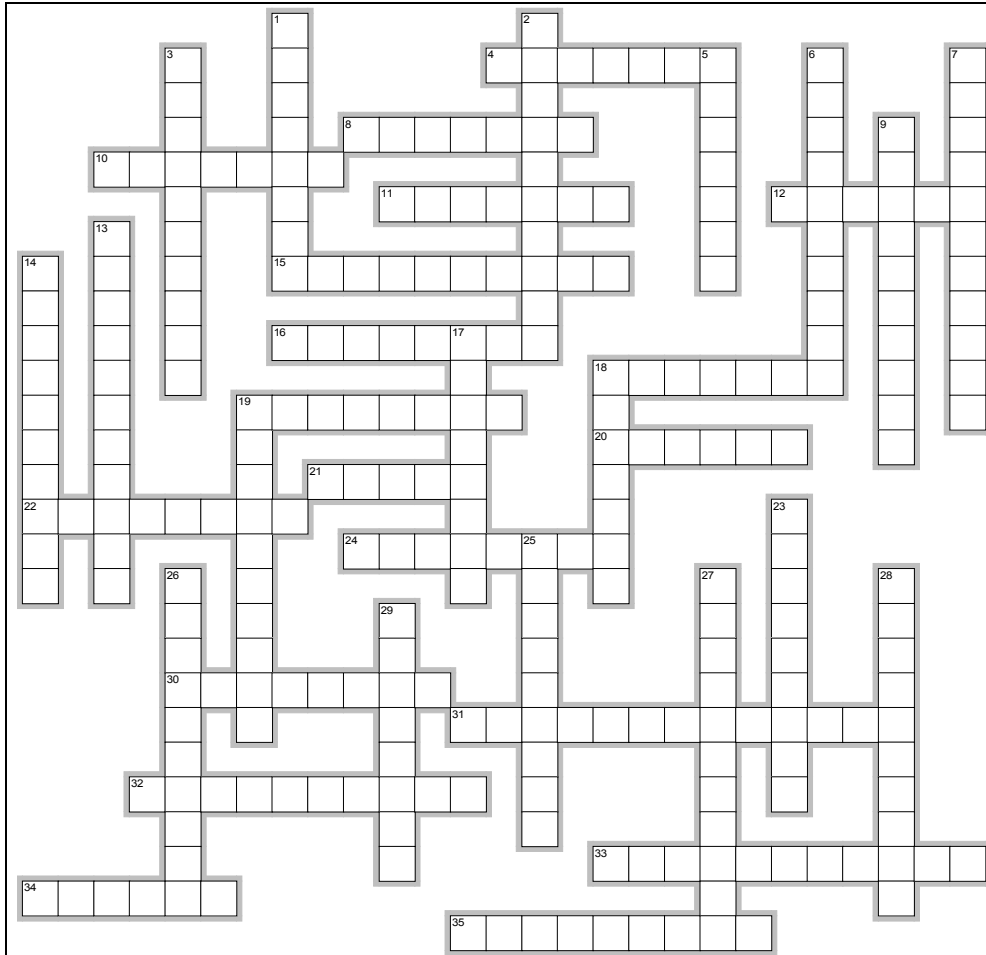
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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



All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Tradition Six pg 196 - 202

Down

4. "Addicts who have a desire to stop using can become _____ of NA simply by saying so." pg 197
8. "If a problem we are having impacts our _____ to stay clean and grow spiritually, it's not an outside issue." pg 198
10. "While a particular _____ may be an outside issue, its effect on our recovery is not..." pg 198
11. "When we share in public, as groups or as a fellowship, we share only our _____." pg 202
12. "What we have to share with the _____ is our fellowship's message, not our personal opinions." pg 201
15. "However, even in _____ our own program in public, we may find ourselves treading on controversial ground." pg 197
16. "But what about speaking in a _____ gathering?" pg 198
18. "As an individual, am I dwelling in the problem or _____ the solution?" pg 199
19. "We have no dues or fees, no pledges to sign, no _____ to make to anyone, ever." pg 197
20. "So long as we keep our _____ welfare and our primary purpose in focus, we will avoid the kind of controversy that distracts us from recovery." pg 199
21. "As a fellowship, we _____ to take positions only on those ideas that have drawn us together..." pg 200
22. "Aside from that, NA has no _____ whatsoever." pg 196
24. "But, for all that, we all know that controversial personal opinions can _____ our meetings from their primary purpose." pg 199
30. "The Tenth Tradition is an _____ in responsibility." pg 200
31. "We may be able to avoid such _____ before they arise simply by thinking carefully before we speak in public." pg 198
32. "We need no one's _____ to talk about such things in our meetings." pg 199
33. "We can, however, take care to explain our program in such a way as not to invite _____ deliberately." pg 197
34. "Most of these _____ have little to do with either addiction or recovery." pg 196
35. "Tradition Ten is _____ practical." pg 201

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

Down

1. "To fulfill Tradition Ten, our groups, service boards, and committees must exercise _____ in their public contacts." pg 201
2. "Individual NA members responsibly exercise the Tenth Tradition by personally guarding NA's _____ whenever and wherever they speak." pg 200
3. "NA members are _____ to think for themselves, to develop their own opinions, and to express those opinions as they see fit." pg 198
5. "If we can be of _____, we stand ready to help." pg 202
6. "Am I sharing from my experience, or am I _____ an opinion?" pg 199
7. To do these things _____, we must stay as free of the distractions of public controversy as possible." pg 200
9. "Tradition Ten restricts NA, as a _____, from stating opinions on outside issues." pg 197
13. "Such prudence will protect our _____..." pg 201
14. "In certain _____, anything an NA member says will be taken as NA's opinion..." pg 198
17. "_____ of our fellowship are constantly in touch with others in society." pg 201
18. "Narcotics Anonymous is a _____ of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean by applying certain simple spiritual principles." pg 196
19. "Foremost among the _____ our groups and our fellowship apply in practicing Tradition Ten is the principle of unity." pg 199
23. "Others who deal with _____ and recovery may view these matters very differently than we do." pg 197
25. "By practicing the Tenth Tradition, we demonstrate our belief in the value of _____." pg 201
26. In meetings, NA members make it clear that what we share is our own _____, not the position of Narcotic Anonymous..." pg 200
27. "Underlying the practicality of the Tenth Tradition, however, can be found a _____ spiritual principle, that of humility." pg 201
28. "We are responsible to provide an _____ in which recovering addicts can share freely with one another." pg 200
29. "Our answer, according to Tradition Ten, is that our groups and our fellowship take no _____, pro or con, on any issues except the NA program itself." pg 196