



THE GUARDIAN

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The Possibilities are Endless

“Our disease has been arrested, and now anything is possible. We become increasingly open-minded and open to new ideas in all areas of our lives”

Basic Text, pg 102

When I arrived at Narcotics Anonymous, beaten by the disease of addiction, just being able to stay clean for a day was something I did not believe possible. After seeing the program working in other addict's lives, I began to think that maybe, just maybe, it could work for me also. By the time I had worked the Second Step, I began to believe, really believe, that if I honestly worked this program; I could stay clean.

Today, I have a much different perspective on life. The things I once thought of as fun no longer have any attraction. By becoming more open minded I have allowed myself to experience the joys of the simple things in life, such as family and fellowship, love and friendship. As I began to respect the views of others, I was better able to learn from their experiences, and apply more of the lessons I heard shared in meetings to my own recovery.

Before coming to the fellowship of NA, I was sure I had destroyed my career, lost the respect of my neighbors, and failed my family. Today, through honestly trying to apply the spiritual principles of the Narcotics Anonymous Steps and Traditions to my life I have started to regain my self-respect. I am doing and enjoying things today I would never have thought possible. Lost dreams have awakened. I am again building a career that is both rewarding and profitable, I no longer am an embarrassment to my family, and my neighbors are beginning to show some respect for me.

I have a disease that wants me to isolate myself from the recovery process, if I begin to think I am superior or inferior, I am again alone. There are still moments when I forget all of the things my disease took away from me. I can still let my ego grow and get in my way. I can be judgmental and intolerant of others, and lose the serenity and peace of mind that comes to me when I remain humble, and remember that I am an addict, just trying to stay clean a day at a time.

Randy E

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Foundation of the First Step

For this addict there are certain principles of the first step that were and remain the foundation for step one. There are three principles that I have had to continuously apply; honesty, acceptance, and surrender.

The first part of the first step asks me to admit my powerlessness over my addiction. This addict wouldn't have shown up at N.A.'s doorstep if I had any sense of control left. This is where the honesty comes in. I have to take an honest look at my addiction. Honesty means truth of factual. The definition that rings very true for this addict is:

4. Obvious fact: something that is so clearly true that it hardly needs to be stated.

I could do nothing but admit my powerlessness over my addiction when I looked at it honestly. The

next thing the first step asks me to do is recognize that my life had become unmanageable. Application of that same honesty here left me with the same issue, if my life were manageable I wouldn't have come to N.A. The key for me was accepting the fact that I could not manage my own life if I was powerless over my addiction. The definition of acceptance that really hit me in the heart was:

3. willingness to believe: willingness to believe that something is true.

Believe means to accept something as true or real.

Once I did that came the surrender. If I am powerless and can't manage my life with the skills I have, then I have to give myself up to open-mindedness. By the time I sat through my first meeting, I knew I would have

to surrender to the process of N.A. if I want to free from the insanity of addiction. When I was finally honest with myself what other option was there, go on to the bitter ends? I knew they were just around the corner. From that point I struggled along just as everyone else did. I never deceived myself with thoughts that my disease was curable though. This kept me grounded in the process of the steps, and I kept my commitment to my recovery. That commitment is N.A. first and life on life's terms second.

This prepared me to open up for the second step. These principles are part of my first step every time I work it. They are my first step foundation.

In Loving Service,
Lee A.

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on November 18, 2007 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.

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

Newsletter

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866-454-3784
24 hours toll free**

**Upper Cumberland
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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

Getting Started
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere
Group
Albany, Kentucky

Primary Purpose Group
Smithville, Tennessee

Unity Group
Crossville, Tennessee

Who Are You Group
Pikeville, Tennessee
(Note: This meeting is held in a correctional facility and is only accessible to those with clearance and approval.)

If we focus only on the problem, the problem will get worse.
If we focus on the solution, the answers will become clearer.

For a long time, most of us knew we had a problem with our addiction; just about everything in our lives revolved around that aspect of ourselves. So our basic problem was that we only concentrated on the effects of our disease without really trying to find a solution. We continued to listen to the demands our disease made upon us. We kept on feeding our addiction, and our main problem got worse.

Once all the lies our disease told us began to unravel, and the rationalizations quit working, we began to feel and understand the unmanageability of our lives brought about through our powerlessness over our active addiction. At that point, we started to earnestly search for a solution.

Eventually we got into the program. Somewhat scared and uncertain of what we would find, we steeled ourselves and entered the rooms. What we discovered was a different atmosphere. We came and we listened. We learned that there are many people who share our disease, have suffered through the same pains, and who help one another along the way. Over time we continually discover that a whole new world is open to

us, so long as we are open to it. In that new world are vast opportunities we never had while we were isolated by our addiction.

Is our problem with addiction completely solved? Are all of our life's problems cleared away? No! However, the answers become clearer so long as we are honest with ourselves and others, open to suggestions, and willing to change. As time goes forward we grow; our physical, spiritual, and mental selves get better.

We will never fully recover from our disease, yet we are given a daily reprieve from our past existence. We are given a chance each day to find hope in the solutions to our problems in life, so long as we are open to new opportunities.

Now, today, I can see that my addiction is a symptom of my overall disease. I can change my life by working my program with the help of my Higher Power, and my friends in the Fellowship.

Will I take the opportunities to find new solutions to the problems in my life today?

Joe A. – grateful recovering addict in central Pennsylvania

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.

Resolving Tradition Violations

Most of us would acknowledge that Tradition violations occur with regularity throughout our Fellowship. Sometimes they result from a lack of understanding of Traditions on the part of the individuals involved. At other times, they are a result of the misguided philosophy of the “end justifies the means”. Sometimes they occur out of a misinterpretation of the principles of autonomy and group conscience. Occasionally self-will is the issue, expressed as “we are going to do it my way or no way”.

Communications and open discussion of the issues are two important ways to avoid Tradition violations. However, remembering that N.A. is a spiritual Fellowship based on principles can resolve many difficulties before they become Tradition violations. Many of us, when we first came to Narcotics Anonymous, wanted a “do it my way program”. We agreed with some of the Steps and thought they were useful; others we thought were the pits. Many of us decided that we would apply and use some of the program and disregard the parts we felt were really hard or conflicted with our “comfortable” recovery. Through experiences of many years, sometimes through painful relapses, it has been found that having a “my way” program did not work. As individuals, we had to learn to follow directions about using the Steps. The same is true of the Traditions.

The Traditions exist in order to keep the Fellowship true to the purpose of recovery and so that the philosophy of N.A. will not change. Adherence to them ensures the growth and continuation of our Fellowship. We must apply them to the problems our Fellowship encounters as they are written, rather than how we think they ought to read. If we do, we are able to assist others to recover in N.A., and our Fellowship grows in an atmosphere of love and acceptance. When the Traditions are not followed, as they are written, our experience has been disunity, chaos, and controversy. In that atmosphere, recovery of newcomers and older members is imperiled.

The handing of a Tradition violation is often a very sensitive matter and requires a great deal of tact and diplomacy; skills a recovering addict is often short of. Most of us have been wrong so often in our lives that it feels good to be right for a change. The tendency is to rush into the discussion, hurl an accusation or two, point a finger, say, “you’re violating our Traditions” and demand change. This type of attitude is self-defeating. We need to be protective of our Traditions, but we need to balance that with tact and diplomacy. Actually, the growth and development of tact and diplomacy are manifestations of having worked the Steps.

A key point we need to keep in mind as we resolve a violation of Traditions is that no one in recovery sets out to intentionally harm the Fellowship. We want to see our Fellowship

grow. We do not consciously choose disunity in our recovery any more than we consciously chose to live miserably during our active addiction. Once we realize this, we can approach the individual or individuals involved from a humanitarian perspective in a spirit of helpfulness and cooperation. We should not make the situation a confrontation from the “I’m right and you’re wrong” point of view. Many of us have learned that being right does not always equate with being happy or solving a problem.

The first step would be to approach the individual on a one-to-one basis. Take time to think of alternative solutions that are within the Traditions before approaching the individual. One way to help with these matters and keep within our Traditions is to provide the individuals with copies of articles written on the Traditions. Allow the individuals time to think about it and talk to other members before broaching the subject again. Always treat the individuals with respect and dignity.

If there is no positive response even after exercise of tact, diplomacy, and helpful suggestion you have been able to muster up, the next step should be taken at the next business meeting of the group. Present the situation, along with the alternatives, and ask that the meeting adhere to the Traditions. At each point in the dialogue request or suggest change; don’t demand. If the meeting continues to violate the Traditions, take the matter to the Area Service Committee.

A letter written to the ASC should be prepared. It should provide accurate, unbiased facts along with alternative solutions. Request the area to write to the meeting, asking them to adhere to the Traditions. If the problem is not solved in this way, the matter should be presented to the Regional Service Committee. However, always remember, if the situation goes beyond the meeting level, controversy, disunity, and chaos are sure to result.

Education is most helpful in promoting an understanding of the Traditions. Tradition workshops and “Learning Days” sponsored by an area or region go a long way towards developing unity and understanding of our Traditions, thus preventing or cutting down on violations. If we can just keep in mind that Traditions are not a matter of having it your way or having it my way, it’s having our way through adherence to our Twelve Traditions. It is the reason our program works.

This article is reprinted in part from Newsline, Vol. 1. No. 9B. It was given to us by Dale S. who has shared many great articles on the Traditions from his personal archives. The entire article is available, and in this article, you will find examples of the most frequently addressed issues, along with some advice on how such matters should be handled.

For a copy of this article, send an email to: ucaguardain@hotmail.com with Resolving Tradition Violations as the subject line, and we will send a pdf. copy of this article to you.