



THE GUARDIAN

SEPTEMBER 2009

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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First Things First

“As we begin to function in society, our creative freedom helps us sort our priorities and do the basic things first”
(Basic Text, pg 83)

When I came to my first NA meeting, my life was totally unmanageable. I had just been released from jail, had no job, no phone number, and no principles at all. I wasn't capable of being a good husband because I only thought of myself. I had no idea how to live without using.

I listened to other addicts share in meetings about how things had been for them before coming to the rooms and how the program had allowed them to put their lives back together. After staying clean for a while, I began to believe that I too could find a new way to live. I got a sponsor and began working the steps, and I was able to stay clean. Staying clean was the easy part for this addict, the drugs had beaten me badly and I never wanted to feel that way again. The hard part was having the patience to build a solid foundation of recovery. I wanted to get my life on the “right track”, and I wanted it right now. My sponsor kept telling me things like “first things first”, and “keep it simple”, but I was not very good at listening at that time. I had a hard time that first year of recovery. I was working the steps and trying to apply the spiritual principles of the program to my life, but I was still attempting to force things to happen. I thought that since I was no longer using I should be able build a career, have a

healthy relationship with my family, and anything else that I wanted.

Sure, it's important to me to have a job, home, car, etc., but I must keep my priorities in order. Before I can expect to achieve all these things, I must have a solid foundation of recovery working in my life. Building a new and successful life is like building a house. Regardless of how well a house is constructed, it is only as strong as the foundation it's built on. Recovery is the same, if I neglect the foundation of my recovery, any life I attempt to build will be shaky at best.

I have heard it said that we work our steps in order for a reason; they build upon one another in a manner that helps us grow. As we work our way through each step we gain an understanding of spiritual principles that we carry with us to the next step, the foundation of our recovery growing stronger with each step we take. We learn to try to apply these principles in all of our affairs. As our faith and trust in our higher power gets stronger, we begin to believe that our lives are being guided by that same power. Surrendering to the process of recovery, we continue to attend meetings, working our steps with a sponsor, and seeking our higher power's will for our lives. It is in this way that we can experience a life that is both rewarding and stable.

Randy E

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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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:

Rockwood New Way
To Live Group
Rockwood, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group
Crossville, Tennessee

New Beginnings
Oneida, Tennessee

Getting Started
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere Group
Albany, Kentucky

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.

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee will be held on October 18, 2009 At 2:30 pm CST in Crossville, Tennessee at the Crossville NA facility.

We are always in need of members 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 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.

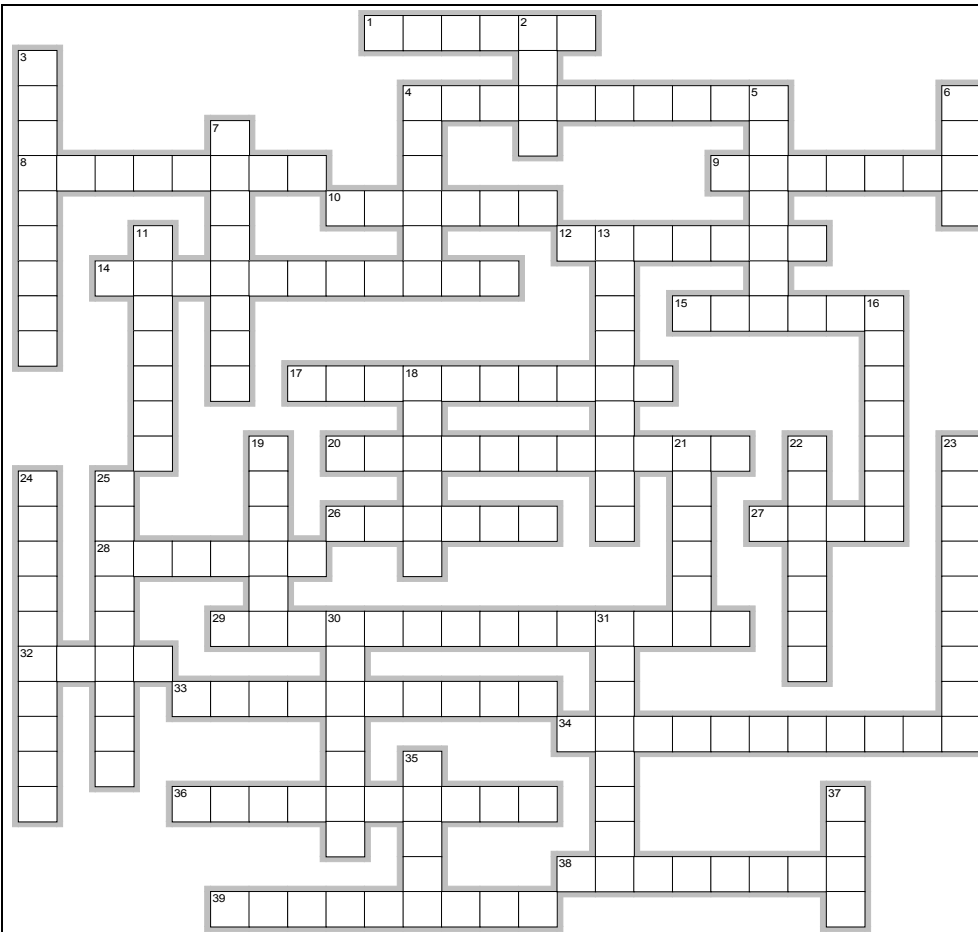
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't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

Step Nine "It Works"



All of the words in the puzzle can be found in "It Works How And Why" Step Nine pg 84 – 95

Across

1. "We may hesitate, fearing other people won't _____ us as readily as our fellow NA members have." pg 85
4. "Some of us have felt compelled to make our amends on an impulse, just to ease our own _____; however, we usually ended up doing more harm than good." pg 89
8. "It is very important that we do our _____ best to make amends." pg 86
9. "Keeping our humility in focus, we ask for help from our _____." pg 87
10. "We mend our _____ and we mend our ways." pg 88
12. "Of course, we may not have an _____ relationship with some of the people we have harmed." pg 88
14. "We cannot base our _____ on the expectation that we won't actually have to make restitution." pg 84
15. "We may be afraid of how our _____ will be received." pg 84
17. "We should not expect a "pat on the back" or praise for living in accordance with the _____ of recovery." pg 86
20. "If we turn ourselves in to the _____, we may go to jail." pg 91
26. "There are many ways to make effective _____ amends without doing it in person." pg 89
27. "Our Higher Power is with us as we _____ each of our amends." pg 85
28. "The people on our list who we can't find should _____ on our list." pg 90
29. Our _____ is to make amends for what we have done wrong, not to force others to admit how they have wronged us." pg 87
32. "We look for ways to _____, not take." pg 93
33. "We agree on a _____ plan for paying off our debts, and we stick to it." pg 92
34. "Now, in recovery, we learn to treat ourselves in ways that _____ our self-respect." pg 93
36. "Some of us have to face _____ that can't be corrected." pg 90
38. "We can't expect our amends to magically heal the hurt _____ of someone we have harmed." pg 86
39. "We must be willing to follow through, regardless of the _____ outcome." pg 85

Down

2. "Our _____ is just that: the past." pg 94
3. "We may owe _____ amends that are beyond our means to pay in the foreseeable future." pg 91
4. "Sometimes, the only way we can make amends is to _____ the way we live." pg 93
5. "The Ninth Step is not designed to clear our conscience at the _____ of someone else." pg 89
6. "Now we must do everything we can to repair the _____ we've caused." pg 84
7. "The spiritual principles of honesty and _____ that we've learned in earlier steps are invaluable to us in the Ninth Step." pg 85
11. "Whenever possible, we _____ each of our amends with our sponsor before we set out to make it." pg 87
13. "If we have _____ our families, we start spending time with them." pg 88
16. "Many of us have found answers in dedicating our lives to helping other addicts and other forms of _____ to humanity." pg 91
18. "Amends of this _____ can't be made in a five-minute apology, no matter how heartfelt." pg 88
19. "This desire to make amends should be the primary _____ for working the Ninth Step." pg 86
21. "We make every _____ to find the people we have harmed and make the best amends we can make." pg 90
22. "We may be _____, or we may be told, "It's about time you did this." pg 86
23. "For instance, if we borrowed money from someone and never paid it back, we don't merely _____; we pay the money back." pg 87
24. "We must be _____ when we work this step." pg 85
25. "We may have difficulty in _____ ourselves, but we can ask for the forgiveness of a loving God." pg 90
30. "Making amends isn't something we do simply because our _____ of recovery suggests it." pg 86
31. "Changing the way we live is a _____ process and is perhaps the most significant amends we can make." pg 88
35. "Just as we do for all of our amends, we discuss our financial amends with our sponsor _____." pg 92
37. "But whether they are willing to accept us or not, we _____ go on with making our amends to them." pg 85