



## **This Thing Called Recovery**

When I first got here, I had to good fortune to meet some of the straightest talking folks I have ever been around. There were times when I really did not like what they told me, but they loved me enough to tell me what I needed to hear not what they thought I wanted to hear. Have you ever heard that saying, "The truth will set you free, but first it will make you mad"? Well, when I was told, "Listening is a spiritual principle, so why don't you shut up and try it", it kind of hurt my feelings, until I realized that I was damaged goods, and really did not have any feelings left. I came to Narcotics Anonymous because I had nothing left to lose; it was definitely the last house on the block for this addict.

One of the first things I heard when I became willing to listen was that as addicts we use this thing called the sympathy card to try to get others to excuse us for our inexcusable behavior. My sponsor told me that I must remove the word sympathy from my vocabulary. I was told if I want to learn to live life to the fullest, I have to take responsibility for my own actions. I can no longer blame others for the mess I have made of my life.

Since I have been around this thing we call recovery I have heard many clichés, and a lot of useless nonsense, but I have also heard some very meaningful

information that has somehow managed to help me stay clean. As a fellowship, we are blessed to have some cool literature. We have a book that has guides for working the steps, but many of us have used it and cannot stay clean. We have a great piece of work we call the Basic Text, and still there are those of us who have read it cover to cover, but are still as miserable as we were in our full-blown addiction. There exists a green book called It Works, How and Why that goes into great detail about our steps and traditions. So why is it that more of our members are not able to use the spiritual principles of our program to find that new way of life we must embrace to become a productive member of society?

It cannot be that all of this information is flawed, so it must be how we use it. Thousands of addicts around the world have found freedom from active addiction by putting these tools to good use. It is one thing to know this program, but it is something else entirely to apply it in our everyday living. Is it easy? Can anyone do it? I cannot speak for you, but just doing what the Serenity Prayer asks of me is at times more than I can handle.

(Continued on page three)

### **In This Issue:**

This Thing Called Recovery

#### **Page 1**

Not Our Business

#### **Page 2**

Why Put Recovery First?

#### **Page 3**

Why Not the Easier Way?

#### **Page 4**

---

## **Not Our Business**

How often have each of us seen a person at a meeting struggling just trying to stay clean for that day? Or someone who is coming back from yet another relapse? Or that person in the back of the room, feeling scared and alone? Or that person we once knew, still in their active addiction, who has yet to make it into the rooms? How often do we wish that we could just cut off some piece of what we now hold that has been freely given to us in this program, and just hand it to that person so they could start to get well? We understand that, "...we can only keep what we have by giving it away..." (Basic Text p. 9), so why won't they just take it?

Unfortunately, although this is a "simple" program, it's not THAT easy. Think of the time(s) that most of us sat in our active addiction, wanting desperately to have a better life, yet not being able to do anything more for ourselves than get that next fix, pill or drink so

we would no longer be sick for that day. We didn't understand our personal powerlessness over our active addiction, and our disease – via denial - did not allow us to recognize the extent of unmanageability in our own lives. Those people who our hearts go out to, and are still suffering in their active addiction, are in the same place we've known all too well in the past. Until their prayers change from, "God, get me out of this one and I will NEVER do it again!," to "God, please help me!," the most we can do is pray to God as each of us understands Him for that person to have the willingness to reach out for help.

We are reminded that, "An addict may be suffering but unwilling to ask for help. We can make ourselves available to these people, so that when they ask, someone will be there." (Basic Text, p. 49) We can welcome them (or welcome them back), let them know we want to help them, tell them that they are not alone, and express to them that NOBODY who comes to

the program is beyond hope. Ultimately, the best that each of us can do is to help other people to help themselves, when they reach out for help. After that, the outcome is up to that person and God, as they understand Him; the results of our trying to fulfill the "primary purpose" are not our business.

Now, today, I realize that although my heart may go out to a suffering addict, there are limits to my opportunities and abilities to help that person. I can't surrender for that person, but I can be available to help them when they are ready to lay down their will in exchange for a better life. The footwork is up to them, while the results are in their own hands and the hands of their Higher Power. - Am I willing to let go and let God manage another's recovery?

Joe A.

grateful recovering  
addict in central  
Pennsylvania

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

### **Newsletter Subcommittee**

Vice-chair: Randy E.

Email:

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:**

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.)

---

## This Thing Called Recovery

(Continued from page 1)

We are a fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem that meet regularly to help each other stay clean, period. We cannot make each other stay clean, but we are able to share are hope, strength, and experience with one another. Even though life still kicks my butt on a regular basis, I must remain persistent in my recovery. Page 87 of the Basic Text tells us,

*(In our experience, no addict who has completely surrendered to this program has ever failed to find recovery).*

It was doing things my way that got me here in the first place; maybe I should try something else. Knowing the steps and traditions will not keep me clean; applying the spiritual principles to my life that I have learned from them will help me to find the kind of lifestyle that using drugs is not a part of.

Randy E.

---

## Why Put Recovery First?

This addict puts recovery first because our literature tells me to. Part of my recovery was learning to take suggestions and giving up my self-centered behavior.

I was reading the Just for Today reading for Aug. the 18<sup>th</sup> and it reminded me of one of the first things that I was told when I came to recovery. "You have a disease and you will have to treat it forever. You will have to put recovery first." My experience with active addiction allowed me to believe all of our readings and I believed that I would have to be a part of NA forever and that I should always keep it first.

I wonder if people still believe that. I see so many people get their lives back and drift away. Who is left to carry the message? Most importantly, what kind of a message is that? We get our lives back and turn our backs on recovery.

Maybe I'm too afraid to try it or I am just too damn grateful for the gifts recovery has given me to selfishly walk away. The literature says to keep these gifts I have to give them away. I want to keep these gifts so I'll take that suggestion. One thing recovery gave me that I am extremely grateful for is that it did not give me my old life back. It gave me a new one.

In loving service,  
an addict

## 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.

---

## **Why Not the Easier Way?**

I thank the God of my understanding that I am fortunate enough to be a recovering addict in the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous. I have not had to sit through group business meetings that were disruptive and dysfunctional, where traditions and concepts of service were ignored or unknown. I never have been to an area service committee meeting that was only concerned with fund raising and activities. It has been a blessing to attend learning days and service functions with members who are trying to do things the way our guiding documents ask us to.

During the last few weeks I have had the opportunity to talk with other addicts who are from different areas and regions. It was in these conversations that I became aware of just how lucky I really am. These addicts tell me about the service structure in their areas. They talk about the lack of members who have knowledge of our concepts and traditions being involved in service. How groups in their areas have a hard time retaining new members, and how the Drug Courts and probation departments have flooded their rooms with people who do not want what our program has to offer.

I have heard some troubling stories about how these things can remove the atmosphere of recovery from not only the individual meetings but from the entire area. If we are not vigilant we could suffer the same fate. We have several members in this area who have had experience in areas that are strong in their service endeavors and where the primary purpose of their groups was fulfilled. We also have members who have seen areas crumble because they became diverted by money, property, or prestige. This is a wealth of experience that we must learn from so when they are no longer with us we can carry their teachings with us in our service positions.

I am an addict, and sometimes I want to take the easier softer way. I do not always want to take the time to learn the things our literature is asking of me. But after hearing all of these stories about Narcotics Anonymous becoming something that I may not recognize, I feel that maybe I should get out my copy of A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous and study it again. I want everything this program has to offer and the only way I can get that is to know everything this program is asking me to know. Of course I can never work a perfect program or do my service position perfectly, but I owe it to the fellowship to give it my very best.

*Anonymous*

---

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on October 21, 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.