



Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

# The Guardian

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## I CAN'T DO EVERYTHING - BUT I CAN DO SOMETHING

Probably the hardest part of NA service for me has been the times when I felt as if I had to do everything or it wouldn't get done.

It's not that I thought nobody else was able to do the service work, it's just that, at times, it feels as if no one else has the willingness to do it. I see so many positions open, and so many things that need to be done to help get the message to the still suffering addict, yet I see very few people stepping up to the plate.

I start to feel guilty, as if I'm not doing enough for Narcotics Anonymous. But what more can I do? It's then that I can get into that "Catch-22" of what if I'm not doing enough service, and how much is too much?

And I know I'm not the only one who has had these feelings. I've seen the same people announcing in every meeting they go to about how badly trusted servants are needed. I've also seen those

same people sitting in every subcommittee meeting. They're labeled as "service junkies" and are said to be hogging the spotlight. In reality, all they are doing is the Twelfth Step.

Those "service junkies" love the program of Narcotics Anonymous with every fiber of their being, and they love the still-suffering addict just as much. Their strongest desire is that the message of NA gets out to everyone who needs it, and at times this desire causes them to take too much on themselves.

I've been there. I've taken on several service positions, tried to juggle them and my personal life, and gotten bunt out as a result. I say none of this to complain or boast, but to tell everyone who feels like they have to do it all: I know how you feel, because I have been there.

It has taken a lot of praying and talking with my sponsor to get to the point where I'm okay with doing service without taking on so much that it starts affecting me. It's okay today not to try to do everything.

I hear it said over and over "Leave it open and someone

will step up to do it". I have to believe that's true, because that's the only way sometimes that I can get rid of those guilty feelings because I'm unable to do more.

I have to remember that there are more people in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous than just me and that it takes all of us to truly make a difference.

Others can decide for themselves whether or not to be involved in service, but I need to do what I have to do for myself, and that means not taking so much on myself that I end up burnt out and having resentments against everyone else.

I love being of service, and don't see a time when I won't be doing something for Narcotics Anonymous. I can't do everything, but if each of us does something who knows what miracles we will see from it.

- Ken H.

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## SO WHAT ABOUT THE CLARITY STATEMENT?

Although we are a Fellowship based on unity and common welfare, Narcotics Anonymous is still comprised of individuals, and if there is one thing all individuals have plenty of it's opinions. Because of this, there have always been certain "sore spots" that fellow recovering addicts never can seem to agree on. One such sore spot is the Clarity Statement - also referred to as the Identity Statement.

In case you don't know, clarity statements are short pieces that are read during the readings section of some NA meetings. Although these statements vary in their wording and content, they say basically the same thing: that using the terms "addict and alcoholic" and "clean and sober" is confusing and implies two different diseases. Narcotics Anonymous makes no distinction between drugs, so it is sufficient to identify ourselves simply as addicts.

### Two Sides of the "Clarity Debate"

Just mentioning the words "Clarity Statement" can cause a group of

otherwise loving and supportive recovering addicts split up into very vocal sides very quickly. One side is very pro Clarity Statement and feels it should be read at every meeting. The other is very much against reading the Clarity Statement because they feel it is just another attempt to govern or control what happens during a meeting.

Before we continue, let me state for the record, that I love the Clarity Statement and was one of the members of my homegroup that voted for it to be read before each meeting (which it is).

However, in spite of how I feel personally about the Clarity Statement, this is not a treatise on the merits of such a statement and how every NA group should use it. Rather, I want to look at both sides of the debate and see if we can't clear up some misconceptions that may be causing much of the disagreement over the Clarity Statement.

### The NA Police and the Clarity Statement

First of all, many of those against using clarity statements say that it's governing and "policing", and that those who

support the reading of the Clarity Statement don't have a right to tell you how to identify yourself in a meeting.

Actually, I've read and heard quite a few clarity statements, and I have yet to see one that says you can't identify yourself any way you want to. Rather, it explains what problems can arise from identifying ourselves as anything other than addicts. Personally, I see the Clarity Statement as instructing rather than dictating, and isn't teaching and instructing how we learn this way of life called recovery? Teach me the best way to get the most out of this program, then it's up to me whether to utilize that knowledge or not, but first I need to be taught the proper way to conduct myself. Otherwise I won't know.

Secondly, those opposed to clarity statements say that because they aren't official NA literature, they shouldn't be read during meetings. Actually, although they stop just short of officially sanctioning clarity statements, NA's World Office says that each group has the right to decide for themselves whether or not to use such a statement.

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

### Newsletter Subcommittee

Vice-chair: Ken H.

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

End of the Road Group  
Woodbury, Tennessee

Freedom Group  
Allardt, Tennessee

Middle of Nowhere Group  
Albany, Kentucky

New Beginnings  
Huntsville, Tennessee

Primary Purpose Group  
Smithville, Tennessee

Unity Group  
Crossville, Tennessee

## THE DEFENSE RESTS

"Quit defending yourself."

These are words I still have to tell myself on occasion. Why do I sometimes feel the need to defend what I say or do, even if I feel my actions are right at the time?

It usually starts out

innocently enough. I might be questioned about something I said or did and will immediately start defending my actions. It is then that doubt sets in and I begin questioning the validity of my actions.

The solution to this problem for me is simple. Quit defending yourself. As long as I'm acting on spiritual principles and I and the God of my understanding are okay

with it, then that's all that matters.

The Basic Text says that "we don't always have to be right, and we can allow others to be wrong." It really doesn't matter if you agree with what I believe or not, the important thing is that I'm okay with it. And if I am, I have nothing to prove to anyone.

- Anonymous

## 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 more than 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 is 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 166 Tami Kay Rd Dowelltown, Tenn 37059, or emailed to [ucaguardian@hotmail.com](mailto:ucaguardian@hotmail.com).

Thank you for your help and support.

## BASIC TEXT PROJECT UPDATE

The Basic Text project is moving into a new phase. The collection period for submissions formally ended on 31 December 2005. If members sent in submissions after that date, we may be able to still use them. We cannot, however, guarantee that submissions received after the deadline will get the same level of attention as those that were sent prior to the deadline.

For the next six months, we will be filling in gaps in the material as we begin to put together the collection of experience for the Basic Text. What we mean by "filling in the gaps" is that we will be actively soliciting some material

from members for identified recovery-related gaps.

The review and input draft for the Sixth Edition Basic Text will be mailed in September 2006. (The essay on the project in the CAR mistakenly says July 2006.) Input on the review draft needs to be completed by March 2007. The approval form draft will be released in September 2007.

Since the beginning of the project we've reported that we have been trying to remove any possible impediments that might have stood in the way of members contributing to the project, so, we utilized a number of different methods to collect stories

for the text. These included interviews (some conducted by members in local NA communities, and some by NAWS staff), local workshops, email, and post submissions. We've given feedback to members who asked for it and facilitated local collaboration and teamwork.

Without exception, everyone we talked with found participating in this project - by writing something, going to a workshop, or helping someone else write something - a wonderful experience. And many members actually felt transformed in some way.

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## SO WHAT ABOUT THE CLARITY STATEMENT?

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The reason for this is twofold. The statements do not go against the teachings of Narcotics Anonymous or support an outside entity.

And since the statements are read before the "sharing session" of the meeting opens, they are part of the meeting format, and the Fourth Tradition states that each group is autonomous where its format is concerned, otherwise World would have to dictate to each group what it could or couldn't say when opening and closing a meeting.

### An "Official" Clarity Statement?

Then there are those who are pro Clarity Statement and feel it should be official NA literature. That could possibly cause more problems than it would solve, because some would be very rebellious against feeling as if they were being forced to read a statement they don't agree with in the first place. And when you think about it, why should they have to read it if they don't want to? After all, as stated above, the Clarity

Statement doesn't tell anyone how to behave or talk, it simply tells why it can be confusing to others for me to identify myself as anything other than an addict. We already have similar statements in our official literature, including the Basic Text, so why have another "official" statement that says the same thing?

Also, any one in favor of using a clarity statement is only fooling themselves if they think simply reading such a statement at the beginning of the meeting will make everyone identify themselves as addicts. It won't. I guarantee you that just as soon as you read the Clarity Statement and open the meeting, somebody is going to be "an addict and alcoholic" and someone else is going to be grateful to be "clean and sober". And why is that? Because it has become second nature to some people, they say it without even realizing it. Then, of course, there are those who will identify themselves in that manner just because they know you don't like it. After all, we are addicts, right?

That's why I say the Clarity Statement is for instructing, not dictating. If you want to make sure no one calls

themselves anything other than an addict in a meeting you attend, start a new group where you are the only member, because that's the only way it's going to happen.

### The Clarity Statement Solution

So what do I feel is the solution to the "Great Clarity Statement Controversy"? Simple. Let's all just lighten up a little. If you like the Clarity Statement and your group uses it, then great. Read it, just don't expect it to be the "great cure-all". And if you don't like the Clarity Statement and your group doesn't use it, then what's the problem?

What it really comes down to is, it's a lot of energy to be wasting over such a small matter when there's a very powerful disease out there killing addicts left and right. I guarantee you, that scared, lonely addict sitting out there tonight doing "one more hit" to try to block out the pain long enough to get through another night couldn't care less if you read the Clarity Statement or not.

- Anonymous

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## WHAT HAS RECOVERY DONE FOR YOU?

Are you grateful for the gifts of recovery this program has given you? Then how about sharing it with others through this newsletter? You think you can't write an article? You don't have to. Just write a letter. An open letter to others who may be going through

something similar to what you've been through and needs some encouragement, strength and hope.

It doesn't have to be long, just a few lines to let others know how recovery has changed your life.

What can you write about? Yourself. Do you share in meetings? Then write

as if you're sharing. The important thing is that we get the message of hope out to others.

You can send any submissions to The Guardian 166 Tami Kay Rd Dowelltown, Tenn 37059 or email [ucguardian@hotmail.com](mailto:ucguardian@hotmail.com).

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The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on May 21, 2006 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.