



Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

The Guardian

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PLAN PLANS, DON'T COUNT ON OUTCOMES

During our active addiction, many of us may have planned out different events in our lives from beginning to end. Fully believing those dreams (or possibly delusions) of hope would come true, our disease lied to us by reinforcing those unrealistic concepts with every binge, spree or run.

One by one our illusions were shattered, leading us deeper into our addiction.

In recovery, we learn to live life on life's terms. In time, at our own pace, each of us changes our old thought patterns and behaviors. We start living in our current realities, each according to the will of the God of their

understanding.

Eventually we find balance in our lives, adjusting to the circumstances and challenges we face each day.

It's human nature to have dreams and make plans. Those things help make up the positive energy that keeps hope alive in each of us. And without hope in recovery, we feel like the empty shell we were upon arriving at our first meeting.

If we're living the spiritual principles of the program to the best of our ability each day, we realize that our dreams and the resulting outcomes may be two different things. Our will at that time may not be what our Higher Power has in store for us.

However, we are

learning the faith to understand that what the God of our understanding has in mind is far better than what we could plan for ourselves.

Now, today, I can plan plans, yet I can't count on outcomes. When my expectations don't coincide with reality, I can realize that my Higher Power will take care of me, so long as I am open to believing that God's will in those times is the best plan for my life, as well as my being willing to change my thoughts and behaviors to fit the situation.

- Am I trusting enough in my Higher Power to take care of the outcomes in my life?

- Joe A.
- A grateful recovering addict in central Pennsylvania

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AN ATHEIST COMES TO BELIEVE

Hi family,

I am a grateful recovering addict, and I would like to share my story of coming to believe in a Power greater than myself.

By the time I came into the rooms, I was an atheist with no belief or interest in anything spiritual. Anyone else could believe in whatever they wanted to, but I didn't want any part of it. I had no time for what I considered to be fairy tales and the day dreams of fools.

I was raised to believe in God, however, and growing up I did try to live the way I was taught was right, but I never was able to quit doing the shameful things I did, and there was always that nagging thought in the back of my mind: "If there really is a God, how could he allow these terrible things to keep happening to me?"

I couldn't understand why I couldn't seem to "get it" like other people did and just live a decent, moral existence.

My desire to believe in something and live a "good life" was always derailed by my inability to quit using drugs and the self-centered "hell-bent for disaster" chaos of my addiction. I became convinced early on that I was a bad person - possibly even evil - and that no God could ever possibly love me, and that there was no hope of me ever being able to live a good life.

As I was growing up, however, I still never gave up on the hope that, if I kept trying, I would eventually be able to reach that peace with myself and God that I had heard so many others talking about.

In my early adult years, that desire to do right and be happy led me to want to become a preacher. In my illogical addict mind, I

figured that this would open the door for me to finally be accepted by God, and would help me to quit using and quit doing the insane things I was constantly doing.

It was actually during my studies for the ministry that I became convinced that God didn't exist. The more I tried to accept what was taught to me, the harder it was to come to terms with my using and self-destructive lifestyle. So I did what any good addict does, and walked away from it all.

This decision to deny the existence of a god of any type actually worked right into my justification for the insane things I was doing. If there was no God, there were no moral standards to live up to or any eternal judgment to worry about, and I could continue doing the things I was doing, worrying only about me and my needs.

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

Newsletter Subcommittee

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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

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.)

WHAT IS RECOVERY?

What is recovery? The dictionary defines recovery as “to return to an original state”. However, that meaning can be very confusing to some of us. After all, our original state may have not been much of a picnic either. I can’t speak for anyone else, but I don’t remember a time when I wasn’t at least a little screwed up.

Even in my youngest years, I remember using things to make me feel better, being manipulative, dishonest and feeling like I didn’t belong. These feelings may not have been as full blown or as chaotic as they became later on, but they were there just the same.

When I first found out what recovery meant, I wasn’t sure if that was really something I wanted. Did I really want to return to my original state? But after I thought about it for awhile, I realized

that is says recovery is returning to “an original state”, not necessarily *my* original state.

To understand better how the definition of recovery fits into the program of Narcotics Anonymous, and my understanding of myself as an addict, a recovering addict and a human being, it is imperative for me to first look at what NA says my role in society as a recovering addict is.

My goal in recovery is to be a productive member of society. To grow and help others to grow and to give back where I used to always take. To live by the spiritual principles that say the common good is more important than my special interests, and that I can no longer expect something for nothing in life, or to do bad to others without expecting bad in return.

So, maybe that’s the original state of which they speak. Maybe it’s not my

original state I’m striving to return to, but the original state of humanity. Maybe it’s not returning to how I used to be, as much as returning to how I was intended to be.

In recovery we are finding a new way to live. New to me, perhaps, but not necessarily new to others who already live the way they were intended to.

Recovery, for me, is about being something different than I’ve ever been before. Striving to live a life based on spiritual principles. Helping humanity by doing the next right thing and helping others to learn how to live life also.

Maybe I never was really the person I was supposed to be, but that doesn’t mean it’s too late to start now. Lost dreams awaken and new opportunities arise, and we do recover.

- 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.

Thank you for your help and support.

AN ATHEIST COMES TO BELIEVE

(Continued from page two)

Like most of us, by the time I found Narcotics Anonymous, I was desperate for help. I felt as if I couldn't go any further. Immediately, however, I heard others sharing and using words like "God" and "Higher Power" and thought Oh man, here we go again. I was so desperate, however, that I decided to stick around and give this "recovery thing" a shot, and maybe I could ignore the "God stuff" and just get what I needed to stay clean.

I struggled a lot with praying and the spirituality of the program at first. I was told I needed to believe in something, but I had no idea how I could bring myself to believe in anything. I had spent years denying the existence of any type of Higher Power, and now here I was being told that the only way I could stay clean and recover was to believe in a Power greater than me. To say I was in a moral dilemma is putting it lightly. I was scared. Those old ideas that I was and would always be a bad person doomed to die a using addict crept back up.

I remember sitting down with my sponsor when it came time to

do my second step and sharing with him how I was having a hard time believing in a Higher Power. After all, how could I believe in something if I had no idea what it was or if it was even really there? He asked me if I believed in air. I said of course I did. You can't see it, touch it or taste it, he said, so what makes you so sure it's there? Because I can breathe it, I replied, and it keeps me alive.

He then replied that something other than me had kept me alive and clean this long, because I couldn't have done it on my own, otherwise I wouldn't be here.

That type of logic was so simple, it actually made sense to me, so I started praying to whatever was there, still not sure exactly what it was, but believing that whatever it was could continue helping me stay clean as it already had.

In working the second step, I began to understand the concept of a God of my understanding. At the time, I understood very little, but I did understand that you were staying clean somehow, and that you shared with me that you believed a Higher Power was responsible. So that became my first understanding of spiritual concepts: I believed that you believed.

My concept of a Power greater than myself grew slowly at first, and I didn't even concern myself with trying to figure out exactly what this Power was. I simply followed suggestions, prayed for guidance from whatever was out there, and allowed my Higher Power to reveal itself to me through my day-to-day living.

Watching miracles unfold before my eyes in my life and the lives of others made my faith stronger and allowed me a greater understanding of my Higher Power, an understanding that continues to grow each day.

I do have a conscience contact with my Higher Power today, and I follow a spiritual path, and I believe that is due to the fact that you loved me enough to allow me to come to my own understanding of a Higher Power in my own time and in my own way.

I thank my Higher Power today for another day clean, another day of recovery, and for the program of Narcotics Anonymous, a program that believed in a tired addict when he no longer felt like he had anything to believe in.

- Anonymous

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on February 19 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.