

Happy, Joyous and Free Times!

Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

<http://www.nauca.org>

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FANNING THE FLAMES

Any of us with some time in the program know that feeling of happiness and gratitude when a newcomer first walks in the door of an N.A. meeting, or when a brother or sister in recovery who went back out decides to come back. That feeling is totally indescribable. You really have to experience it first hand to truly understand it.

Seeing that confused, hurt addict walking into a meeting, scared and ashamed, looking for help, for something that will perhaps end the suffering they are going through, is enough to make you feel like your heart has been wrenched right out of your chest. We are so happy to see them, we want them to get it, and we want them to stick around and experience the same miracle in their lives that we have experienced.

Of course, we know that we can't get it for them. The choice of recovering or going back out rests on them. We can, however, help them by the way we treat them. The one thing any of us want more than anything else when we first come in, or return, to the program (besides not using) is to feel accepted, whether we realize it or not. I need to welcome those addicts with a big hug and smile, let them know how happy I am that they are there and hold them close. Talk to them before and after the meetings. Invite them to coffee or out to eat after the meeting. Spend a few extra minutes on the phone with them. Whatever it takes to let them know that they are important and to make them feel welcome.

When that addict first walked in the door and heard the N.A. message, a spark was ignited in them. A spark that let them know that there is a better way to live. They are looking for someone to help them learn this new way of life. If they aren't made to feel a part of right away, that spark could die out. They may decide that this way of life won't work for them after all, and we could lose them, possibly for good.

It's up to me to fan the flame, share with them my excitement and love for the program. Hang out with them and let them see for themselves how much recovery has blessed me. That could in turn help them to decide to give recovery a chance and let the miracle happen in their own lives. That spark could erupt into a bright, glowing fire all its own, and in turn, they could be the one waiting when the next newcomer walks in the door. Someone whom they could share the wonders of recovery with. Fan the flame of a newcomer's recovery, and you just may be amazed at the forest fire of recovery it will ignite.

- Ken H.

The Purpose of Happy, Joyous and Free Times is to help share the message of Narcotics Anonymous to the Upper Cumberland Area. Narcotics Anonymous is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. A meeting schedule can be found at <http://www.nauca.org> .

HAVE YOU BEEN SERVED?

Currently, there are many areas within the Volunteer Region, including the Upper Cumberland Area, and on the Regional Committee itself, that are in dire need of trusted servants. It seems that this is something that I have seen throughout my time, in all types of service, since I have been clean.

We have the dilemma of people who are willing to serve, but no one to help them do their task. When we elect trusted servants, it is the Fellowship's responsibility to support them. This is clearly stated in our 12 Concepts. "What are the Concepts?", you might be asking yourself. Well, then you might want to ask your sponsor about it, and/or pick up a copy at your next Area Service Committee (ASC) meeting, or ask your Group Service Representative (GSR) to get one for you. It is a great "small" booklet on how we can better serve each other.

But I digress... anyway; something you hear constantly at the ASC or other levels of service is, "WE NEED SUPPORT!" Well, just who are these people serving? US!!! The reason we have a service structure is to serve the needs of us, the home group members. Do we think it will just magically get done without our input, time and resources? Anyway, something that has been kicked around for years is having home group members support the subcommittees by having a member on each committee. Now, I know some home groups are small, but we can all just do what we can.

Something else to think about is this... supporting these sub-committee meetings is a relatively small time commitment. The meetings are generally only one hour and they only meet once a month. Plus, you will have direct access to information that might get glossed over in an ASC meeting or not translated back to the group fully through the GSR because of information overload (we need to support them, too). Another bonus to just sitting in on these meetings is that there are no clean time requirements to just attend. If you are new, you can do like we do at recovery meetings... listen and learn. Then when you do have the clean time, you will know what you are getting into before you volunteer to jump into a service position.

In closing, if you are reading this, maybe just take a moment at your next "brief home group business meeting" to discuss this. This is a "we" thing. It is amazing when addicts get together for the common good. Look at the folks in Chattanooga that were told for years that they were too small to have a VRC. They reached out, asked for guidance and support and now we just had our first VRC in Chattanooga. They could not do it alone... none of us can. We all need more help, more support, more we. I know I am going to bring it up at my next home group meeting and I will ask myself how I can get more involved... how about you?

In Service,
Scott W.

I SURRENDER!

"Our fears lessen and faith begins to grow as we learn the true meaning of surrender." (Basic Text p.26)

Surrender is a vital part of my recovery. When I first decided I needed help, I had to surrender to the face that I was an addict. Then I had to surrender to a Higher Power. I also had to surrender and follow the suggestions of this program and other recovering addicts.

It is through surrender that my faith began to grow. It became the foundation of my recovery, and each time I surrendered to something else, my idea of self-importance lessened and my faith in Narcotics Anonymous grew. I have had to constantly surrender all through my recovery. I still surrender today. As a matter of fact, I surrender everyday when I wake up and pray to my Higher Power to guide me throughout my day.

When I first came into N.A., I viewed surrender as a sign of weakness. I now see it as a sign of strength. It takes a strong person to admit when they can't do something on their own. It is also a sign of strength to live by faith. Surrendering means I don't have to have all the answers today. It also means that I don't have to be alone. My Higher Power can guide me in everything I do, as long as I surrender to His will.

I found surrendering to be very hard at first. It took a lot of willingness, something I didn't have in much abundance back then. It also took a lot of practice before I was able to surrender something and not take it right back. I did find, however, that surrendering became easier to me the more times I did it.

That does not mean that surrender is always easy. That depends on how spiritually fit I am. When I start drifting away from the spiritual principles of this program, I find that I am not as eager to surrender to the will of my Higher Power, or to the program.

I do find that surrender alleviates almost all of my problems. When I turn something over to my Higher Power, then I don't have to worry about what the outcome will be. When I follow the suggestions of this program, I don't have to be constantly worried about whether or not what I'm doing is the right thing. When I admit my powerlessness, I don't have to try to prove that I'm right and you're wrong. Instead, I can enjoy my life today and be okay knowing that whatever happens, it's going to be alright.

Yes, life is much simpler today as long as I remember, when I wake up, to say "I surrender!"

- Anonymous

If you have found this newsletter and think you may have a problem with drugs, Narcotics Anonymous can help. If you need a schedule of meetings in the Upper Cumberland Area, or if you would like to talk to a recovering addict, call 931-484-6384 or toll free 866-454-3784.

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING

(The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous truly are "the ties that bind us together". As important as the Steps are to personal recovery, so the Traditions are to group survival and to insure that our meetings fulfill their primary purpose. Each month, we will look a little closer at a particular Tradition, because we cannot implement a tool of recovery until we can begin to understand it.)

Tradition Ten:

"Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

"Our recovery speaks for itself. Our Tenth Tradition specifically helps protect our reputation. This tradition says that N.A. has no opinion on outside issues. We don't take sides. We don't have any recommendations. " - Basic Text, p.71

Some thoughts to ponder concerning Tradition Ten:

- 1) What does Tradition Ten mean by "outside issues"?
- 2) What types of controversy might be caused by not following this tradition?
- 3) How does this tradition affect how we share in meetings?
- 4) Have you seen problems caused by not following this Tradition? How were they resolved?
- 5) How does Tradition Ten relate to our primary purpose?
- 6) How does Tradition Ten relate to unity?
- 7) How does this tradition relate to Tradition Five?
- 8) How does this tradition relate to Tradition Six?
- 9) How does Tradition Ten help N.A. to keep its good reputation?
- 10) How does this tradition insure the growth of N.A.?

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Do you have an article, poem or personal story you would like to share with other recovering addicts? Maybe you would like to share an interesting experience of how your Higher Power has intervened in your life. Or maybe you would like to tell how you have applied the principles of Narcotics Anonymous in your life to overcome a difficult situation. Any submissions you have can be sent to Happy, Joyous and Free Times 300 Neal Dr. Dowlstown, Tenn 37059. Or email hjnftimes@hotmail.com.