



Serving the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics Anonymous

The Guardian

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REMEMBERING TO BE HUMAN

Living a life in recovery can be really tricky at times. If I'm not really careful, I'll lose my identity. I know, because I've done it before. Trying to do the next right thing, working on recovering, trying to be spiritual - can all take a toll on me if I allow it. And if I'm not careful, I'll forget that I'm human.

Forgetting to be human can be terrible. I forget that it's okay to laugh. It's okay to have fun. It's okay to cry. It's okay to get upset. It's okay to do all those things that make humans such unique creatures in the first place.

In active addiction, I was an extension of my disease. At times in recovery, I have been an extension of the program. It was as if I didn't exist

beyond Narcotics Anonymous. I had no identity of my own other than as a recovering addict.

Well, I am a recovering addict. I'm also human. I don't know about you, but my Higher Power wants me to be human, to have my own identity, otherwise I'm simply a carbon copy of those I try to emulate, and there's nothing spiritual about that.

In the third step we say " ... And show me how to live", yet there's times when I'm "so busy recovering" that I forget to live.

Now, I'm not talking about not going to meetings because I have a life to live. I'm talking about making life - and being human - a part of my recovery. Laughter can be very spiritual. So can stomping through puddles with a three year old after a hard rain.

There's nothing wrong with enjoying life. After all, that's why I'm in recovery.

If I'm not real careful, I can be too spiritual for my own good. I can become so spiritual that everything that is natural to humans becomes wrong to me. I elevate to a higher plane than all the "earth people" because I am so gosh-darned spiritual, and there's nothing spiritual about that. I then become a separatist. That's what I was in active addiction. I was either better than - or not as good as - you. I don't want to be that way today.

Of course I protect my recovery. But I also protect my right to be human. So if you see me running through puddles, you can either judge me for not acting spiritual, or you can join me. The choice is yours.

- Ken H.

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RECOVERY CONQUERING THOUGHT PAT- TERNS

Living a spiritual life can seem very frightening at times. In defense, your mind may go into "defeat mode" and start thinking that maybe you can't do this "recovery thing". This will then leave you susceptible to the following recovery conquering thought patterns:

1.) All Or Nothing Thinking.

There are no good or bad days. A single bad day decides who you are or are capable of. For example: "My whole day is ruined because I was late for work this morning."

Just remember that who you are isn't defined by what type of day you may have. As long as you are human, perfection isn't an option, so you will have some good days, and some bad days. Just roll with it, and remember that you can

start your day over at anytime.

2.) Seeing Only Dark Clouds.

Failure lurks around every corner and comes to be expected. For instance, a single negative aspect, piece of criticism, or passing remark becomes a life-changing catastrophe.

If you look for reasons to think of yourself as a failure, you will find them. You will begin to question everything you do and everything others say, and soon you will find your confidence in yourself and the program completely gone.

3.) Total Acceptance Of Feelings As Truth.

How you feel about yourself defines who you are. For example: "I feel stupid so it must be true."

Feelings are usually emotionally based and have no basis in fact. You can feel full of confidence or like a total failure on any

given day. Your self-worth should not be dependant on how you feel on a day-to-day basis.

4.) Overemphasis On "Should" Statements.

"Should" statements are perfectionist in nature and reflective of others' standards instead of expressive of your own needs and desires. For example: "Everyone should be happy and serene when they get a year clean. I'm not, so there must be something wrong with me."

"Should" statements are normally used after the fact to reiterate to yourself what you did wrong and are designed only to break down your confidence. A friend of mine calls this "shoulding" on yourself.

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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.)

FREEDOM	INTEGRITY	STEPS	EMPATHY
ANONYMITY	TRADITIONS	AMENDS	FAITH
SPONSOR	CONCEPTS	DESIRE	HIGHERPOWER
SPIRITUAL	PRINCIPLES	FELLOWSHIP	FORGIVENESS
RECOVERY	HUMILITY	GRATITUDE	HONESTY

A X E E M B B P T T T Y C Y C D Q G T T
C F O R G I V E N E S S G N S T E P S V
P R I N C I P L E S U T K W P R Y X E I
Y U J S F Y Q D I N T E G R I T Y V C R
I L N W V T S P I R I T U A L B D Z U E
H O N E S T Y I A S X B W F A I T H B W
D E P J A J F E L L O W S H I P M R Q O
E B A X G T L C F K H J I V J F J S S P
M L G R A T I T I U D E X U W R K P G R
Q N D E S I R E L A W T T B R E N Z W E
U P Y T I M Y N O N A T S G Z E Q P R H
U D F Q Y L A G G T U R I Z H D C H D G
A E Q N H D V Z M C B A F N U O S S S I
K L K N S D N E M A X D F P Q M H Y G H
Q M R E C O V E R Y M I P F Z Y I H W R
L B M Y W R R Z C S F T S P O N S O R R
H C O N C E P T S R T I H K S M R U V T
V N N T Y H T A P M E O C V J B F X Z O
H U M I L I T Y M B K N O G W T V I Z D
X B V S V E L M L O M S A V F M G D O J

RECOVERY CONQUERING THOUGHT PAT- TERNS

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two)

5.) Difficulty Ac-
cepting Compliments.

Justifying your
own low self-esteem

by rejecting the oppo-
site opinions of others.
For example: "You
liked what I shared in
the meeting? I thought
it Sounded dumb."

Sometimes it's
okay to accept a com-
pliment with a simple
"thank you" and go on.

Now that you are
aware of what the RE-
COVERY defeating
thought patterns are,
avoid them at all costs
because they will rob
you of your serenity
and, possibly, your
recovery.

- 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.

T.I.M.E. - THINGS I MUST EARN

How often have you attended meetings and observed the inner happiness of some members? They weren't using, had self-respect, and they seemed to enjoy a freedom that we desperately wanted. In early recovery, many of us still felt fearful, helpless and hopeless. We felt vulnerable and exposed, because we didn't have our drug-of-choice to help us fill the spiritual void we still felt inside. What did these people hold inside that we couldn't find?

We didn't use, just like them, went to meetings, just like them, we listened, just like them, and we did what they told us to do; we kept coming back. So what was wrong with us? The short answer: nothing. We were doing what we're supposed to do.

Our fellow members did not receive their gifts of recovery overnight. Our Basic Text reminds us, "We didn't become addicted in one day, so remember – easy does it." (p.18). We can't expect instant

miracles in all areas of our lives just because we put down that fix, pill or drink. However, we are experiencing the one promise our program has to offer, "Narcotics Anonymous offers only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction..." (p.102). If you think about your own personal past, that alone is a miracle. And just because we don't have the inner peace that we observe in others, it may be that we just haven't looked deep enough.

For example, do the never-ending thoughts of using still take up every moment of your day, and invade your dreams every night? Are you regaining your health? Can you actually hold down food when you eat? Can you actually stand to look yourself in the mirror today? Paying a few bills? Do you want a better life for yourself? Are some (or all) of these things a change from your active addiction? Well, those fellow members you see who are happy, joyous and free felt the same.

One thing they discovered in their process was: T.I.M.E. –

Things I Must Earn. Over time, the changes they needed to make involved letting go of their old, negative thought patterns which seemed to "protect" them in their once fear-driven lives. When they quit recycling those old concepts, they were open to working the Steps, revealing their true nature to their sponsors, and developing a loving relationship with the God of their understanding. They acquired the willingness to, and then made those changes, little by little. They earned their serenity over time, not overnight.

Now, today, I can get out of my own way and start helping myself. I can find the happiness, self-respect and freedom that I see in others by being open to the changes I need to make. I can listen to my sponsor and fellow members on a deeper level about the changes they made, and I can pray to my Higher Power for the willingness to follow their suggestions.

- Am I willing to allow myself T.I.M.E.?

- Joe A. – grateful recovering

"Spirituality becomes a way of life for us as we live by the principles of recovery. The example of a life lived according to these principles is potentially the most important message we can carry." - *It Works: How and Why*, p. 121, Step Twelve.

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland Service Committee will be on April 15 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.

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