



THE GUARDIAN

JANUARY 2011

A New Beginning

When I was using the thing that bothered me the most was knowing that at one time I was a good person. I was a good father to my children and I tried to be a good husband. I wasn't ashamed of the man that I was, I liked that guy. Using drugs had changed me, I had become a different person, and I hated being that person.

I had reached a point where I couldn't control my drug use, that was when I felt everything I cared about slipping away. It didn't take long for that slipping feeling to become a landslide. I cared less and less who I hurt, before I knew it I was stealing to get my fix. I tried to hang onto my job, but I couldn't earn enough to keep from being dope sick. I finally got too sorry to work at all. I hated everyone and everything. At times I even prayed that the next fix would be the one that killed me. I was so sick of living that way, something had to change.

I'd seen my life go straight to hell because of my drug use. The longer I used the more unmanageable my life became. I had tried to stop using on my own but it never lasted for

long. Each time I failed to change, things just got worse. It got to the point that I thought, this is it, this is the way it's suppose to be, I can't ever get better. I had finally come to end of the road.

The first step tells me I must make an admission, I must admit that I am an addict, that I can't use drugs successfully...ever. As long as I have any doubt about this, I'm doomed. I had to know I was beaten, that the drugs had won. I had to become willing to ask for help from others who had been though what I was going through. I realized I could no longer blame others for my problems. I was the one that had made a mess of my life, if I was going to find a new way to live I would have face that fact. It will take a lifetime of work to stay clean and learn to live in a way that I am proud of. The first step is just the beginning of this new life, but with my new friends and the NA program I'm ready to give it my best shot.

An Addict Named Jon

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The Steps Are The Answer

When we work the program, we live the steps daily. This gives us experience in applying spiritual principles. The experience that we gain with time helps our ongoing recovery. "We must use what we learn or we will lose it, no matter how long we have been clean." (*Basic Text pp. 81-82*). When I first came into Narcotics Anonymous I was told over and over "work the steps, work the steps". People shared in meetings about how many times they had worked the steps. I was told that I needed to work the steps as soon as possible. It seemed as if answering the questions and writing an this stuff on paper was going to be the "quick fix" I needed to get my life back in order. Well, actually I was partially right. First of all, working the steps is vitally important to recovery, and that is not just my opinion. "How It Works" in the Basic Text states: "If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are the principles that made our recovery possible." The steps are indeed an integral part of recovery. After all, that is how I learn to recover. Secondly, writing the steps down on paper is also a very important part of the process for me. I can think that I'm powerless or that I've surrendered as much as I want to, but once I have the cold hard facts staring me back in the face in black and white, then

that's the time to get honest.

Writing it down on paper also allows me to go through the process. Whether it's turning over a character defect or looking at my part in something from my past so that I can get to where I'm supposed to be. The steps are not a "quick fix" however. Indeed there are no "quick fixes in recovery. Recovery is as fast or slow as I make it, and it is a process. I will never do it perfectly. As long as I can say that today I did it to the best of my ability, then I'm doing okay. That is the true point when recovery really begins. I work the steps in order to learn how to live the steps, "to practice these principles in all my affairs". "It is only through understanding and application that they work." I must first understand the spiritual principles that reside in each and every one of these steps: honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, faith, and anonymity to name just a few. It is only then, once I have begun to understand these principles, that I can begin to implement them in my life. I truly begin to live the steps and not only am I blessed by doing so., but I also become an example for others of what this program can really do. I must learn to live the steps on a daily basis. My recovery depends on it. Because as the Basic Text points out, if I don't I will lose it.

An Addict In Recovery

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

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**Upper Cumberland Area of
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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:

New Way To Live Group
Crossville, Tennessee

Crossville NA Group
Crossville, Tennessee

Promise of Hope Group
Cookeville, Tennessee

New Beginnings Group
Oneida, Tennessee
&
Helenwood, Tennessee

Getting Started
Crossville, Tennessee

Freedom Group
Allardt, Tennessee

Unity Group
Crossville, Tennessee

* Who Are You Group
Pikeville, Tennessee

* Free And Clean Group
Pikeville, Tennessee

* This meeting is held in a correctional facility and is only accessible to those with clearance and approval.

Basic Text Tradition Worksheet

Please take the time to use your Basic Text with these questions to improve your understanding of the Traditions of our fellowship. The principles that the Traditions teach us can help protect our primary purpose. So that no addict need die from the horrors of addiction.

Tradition One:

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA Unity" (Pages 59-60)

Tradition One **guarantees** our survival and freedom as a Fellowship to continue to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

1. What are the two things Tradition One concerns itself with?
2. What is imperative to our survival as an addict?
3. Does this tradition teach us that we don't need certain addicts?
4. Can we put members out whom we don't like or who do not do what we tell them to do?
5. How do we lead and learn from each other in Narcotics Anonymous?
6. What do we do differently in NA concerning our personal desires?
7. What does our personal experience teach us about self-sufficiency?
8. What three common themes did we find in our recovery?
9. How do we deal with disagreements and conflicts in NA?
10. What are some of the commonplace activities in our Fellowship?
11. How do we ensure that we will survive and continue to carry the message to the addict who still suffers?
12. How can we apply and practice the spiritual lessons of common welfare, unity, compromise, teamwork, settling disagreement and conflict in our home lives outside of the Fellowship?

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.

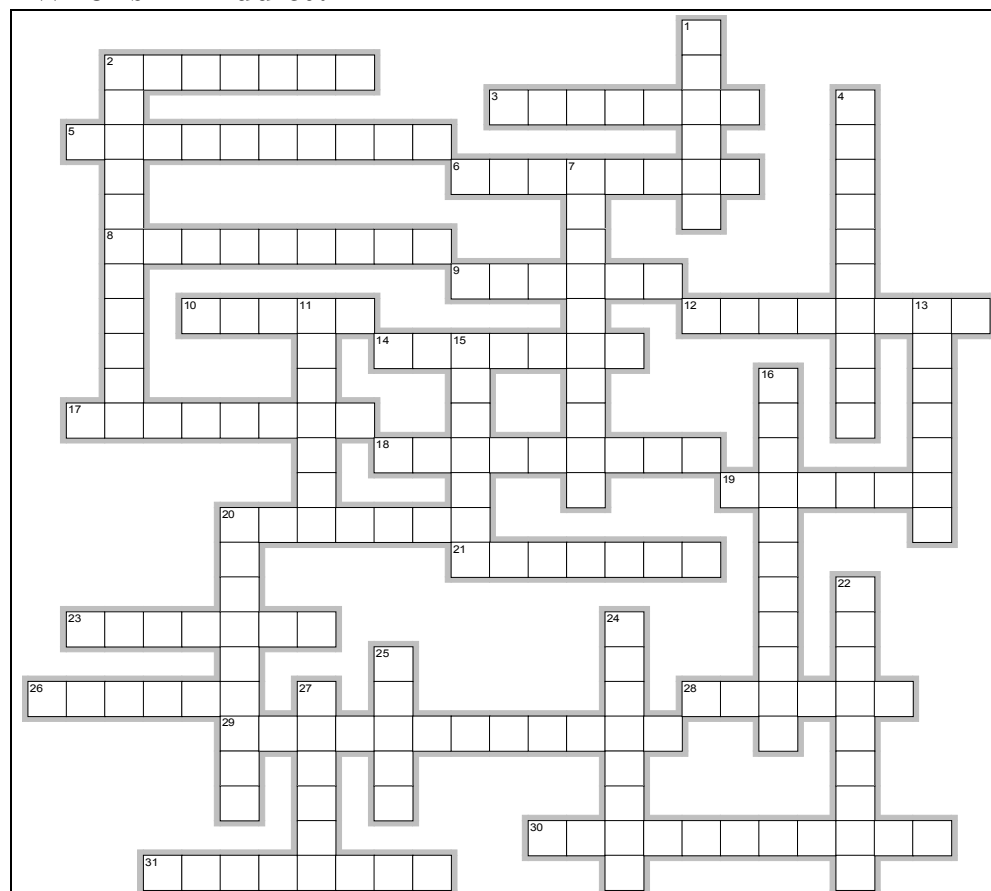
Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, we will be happy to make any spelling or punctuation corrections for you. The important thing is that you will be sharing your recovery with another addict. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. The length of your article isn't 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.

“Who Is An Addict?”



All of the words in the puzzle
can be found in the
"Fifth Edition Basic Text"
Chapter One pages 3 - 8

Down

1. "We _____ what it was like before we started using; we forgot about social graces." pg 6
2. "The only alternatives to recovery are jails, institutions, _____ and death." pg 8
4. "Through _____ and through working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, our lives have become useful." pg 8
7. "We may have tried to moderate, _____ or even stop using..." pg 6
11. "Some of us first saw the _____ of addiction on the people closest to us." pg 7
13. "This seems _____, but many of us have been in this state of mind." pg 5
15. "We have a disease, but we do _____." pg 8
16. "The _____ available to us came from misinformed people." pg 3
20. "We begin to treat our _____ by not using." pg 7
22. "The fact was that we could not use any mind-altering or mood changing _____, including marijuana and alcohol, successfully." pg 4
24. "Once we _____ ourselves as addicts, help becomes possible." pg 7
25. "While _____, we lived in another world." pg 6
27. "One _____ of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on life's terms." pg 4

Learning to use our literature helps us stay clean, the solutions are always in there.

Across

2. "Addiction is a _____ that involves more than the use of drugs." pg 3
3. "We fell into a _____ of selective thinking." pg 4
5. "Those of us who don't die from the disease will go on to prison, mental institutions or complete demoralization as the disease _____." pg 7
6. "Most of us do not have to think twice about this _____." pg 3
8. "Like other _____ diseases, addiction can be arrested." pg 5
9. "Some of us used, misused and _____ drugs and still did not consider ourselves addicts." pg 4
10. "We suspected that we had lost control over the drugs and had no _____ to stop." pg 6
12. "Some addicts needed to go to greater _____ than others." pg 6
14. "The disease is _____, progressive and fatal." pg 7
17. "Our addiction _____ us." pg 7
18. "Our world shrank and _____ became our life." pg 4
19. "We had to reach our _____, before we were willing to stop." pg 7
20. "When we did seek help, we were only looking for the _____ of pain." pg 5
21. "We avoided the _____ of our addiction." pg 4
23. "We were forced to _____ any way that we could." pg 4
26. "Very simply, an _____ is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs." pg 3
28. "We did not _____ to become addicts." pg 3
29. "As our addiction progressed, many of us found ourselves in and out of _____." pg 5
30. "Some of us feel lonely because of _____ between us and other members." pg 6
31. "Our _____ to drugs is what makes us addicts, not how much we use." pg 5