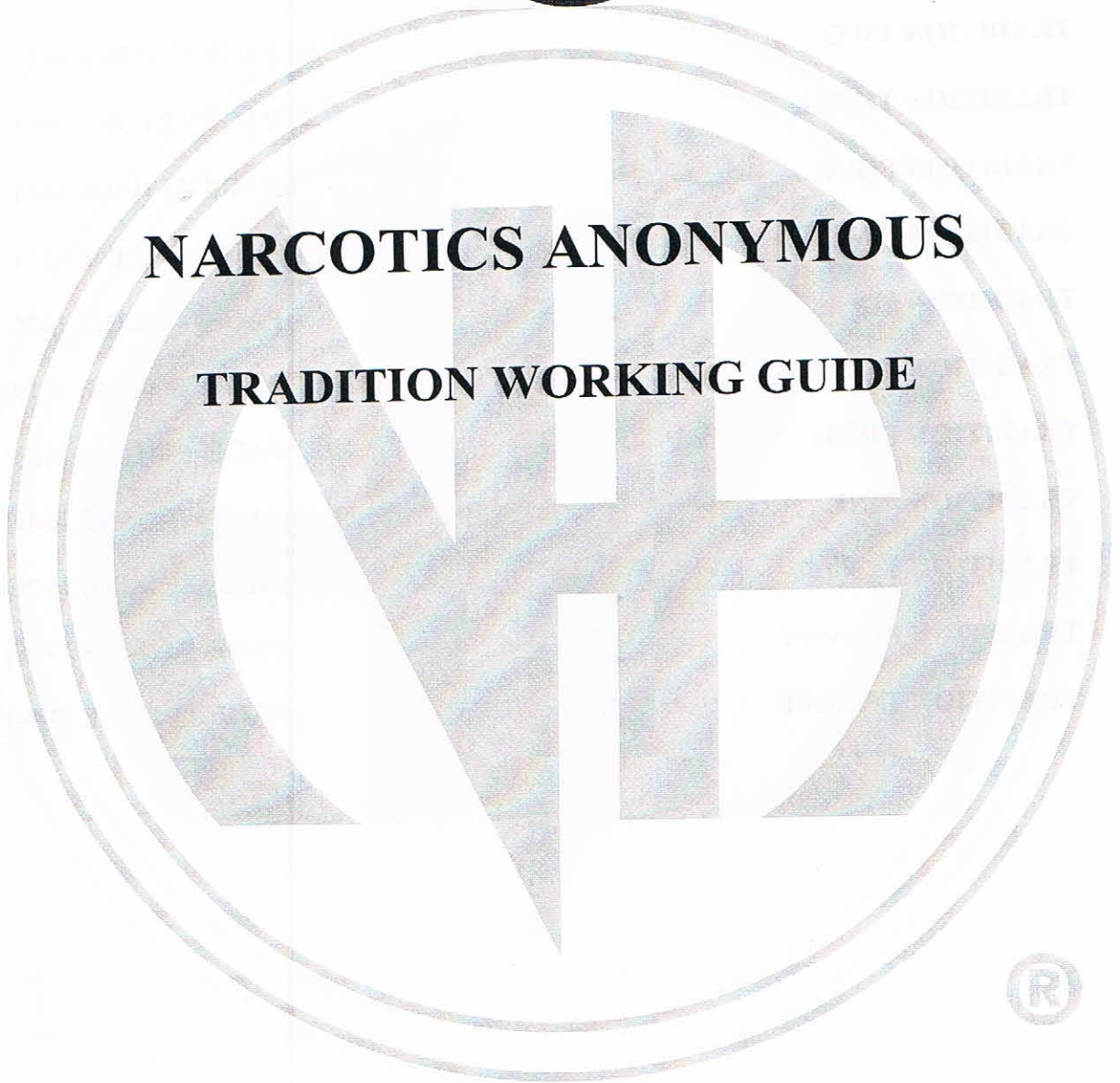


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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
TRADITION WORKING GUIDE



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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS GUIDE TO THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

“We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps so freedom for the group springs from our Traditions. As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that will tear us apart, all will be well. Understanding these Traditions comes slowly over a period of time. We pick up information as we talk to members and visit various groups. It usually isn’t until we get involved with service that someone points out that personal recovery depends on N.A. unity, and that unity depends on how well we follow our Traditions. The Twelve Traditions of N.A. are not negotiable. They are the guidelines that keep our Fellowship alive and free.”

“By following these guidelines in our dealings with others, and society at large, we avoid many problems. That is not to say that our Traditions eliminate all problems. We still have to face difficulties as they arise: communication problems, differences of opinion, internal controversies, and troubles with individuals and groups outside the Fellowship. However, when we apply these principles, we avoid some of the pitfalls. Many of our problems are like those that our predecessors had to face. Their hard won experience gave birth to the Traditions, and our own experience has shown that these principles are just as valid today as they were when these Traditions were formulated. Our Traditions protect us from the internal and external forces that could destroy us. They are truly the ties that bind us together. It is only through understanding and application that they work.”

It is very important that we understand and abide by our Traditions. The very survival of our Fellowship is at stake. By these principles we are committed to one another, not only to those addicts who are here but those yet to come. The Traditions were built upon anonymity,

65 the spiritual foundation from which we grow. Applying the Traditions is an obligation to us
66 all. Despite our personal views or feelings, we must keep our Traditions first. This guide is
67 designed to help us understand the Traditions and to work through any differences that we
68 might have.



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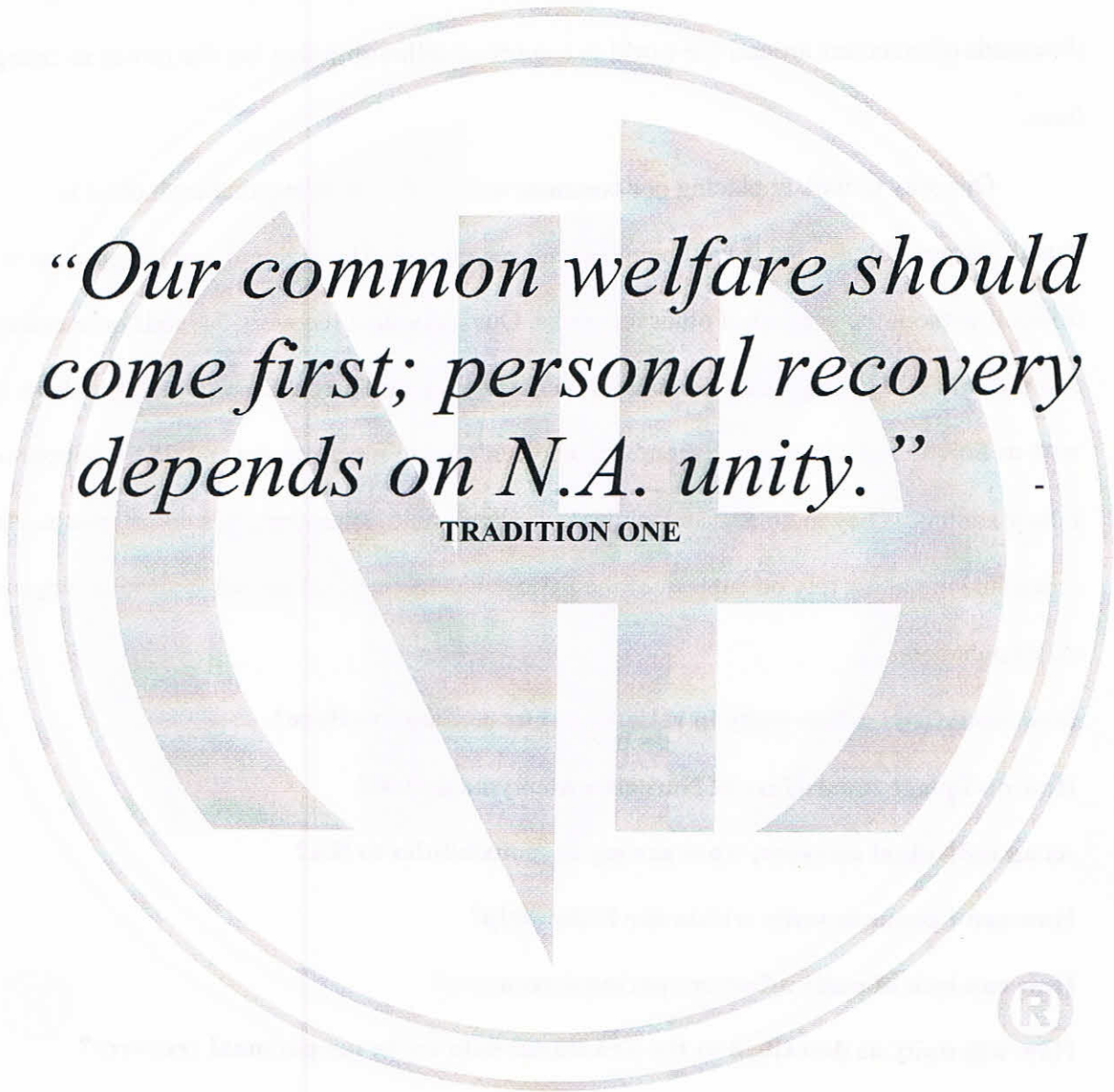
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*“Our common welfare should
come first; personal recovery
depends on N.A. unity.”*

TRADITION ONE



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102 Narcotics Anonymous is more than just the meetings we attend. We are part of a
103 greater whole. We share an equal membership in NA, and we all have an interest in
104 maintaining the unity that underlies its common welfare. Unity is the spiritual link that joins
105 thousands of members around the world in a spiritual fellowship that has the power to change
106 lives.

107 One way to look at placing our common welfare first is to say that each of us is
108 equally responsible for NA's well being. In our recovery, we have found that living clean is
109 difficult without the support of other members. Our individual recovery depends on meetings
110 that take place regularly, other recovering addicts who participate and sponsors who share
111 with us how to stay clean. Even members who can't get to meetings depend on the support of
112 fellow addicts. They maintain contact through phone calls, letters, and NA loner groups. As
113 individual members rely on support of the Fellowship for survival, so NA's survival depends
114 on its members.

115 **How would you define unity in relation to our common welfare?**

116 **How do I place the welfare of Narcotics anonymous first?**

117 **As an individual member, what are my responsibilities to NA?**

118 **How can I promote unity within the Fellowship?**

119 **How can lack of unity affect my personal recovery?**

120 **How will unity as described in the Traditions help me in my personal recovery?**

121 Our First Tradition encourages not only our members but also our groups to place our
122 common welfare first. Most groups conduct most of their affairs on their own. In attending to
123 the details of their daily routines, autonomous NA groups may lose sight of the bigger picture.

124 In the larger frame, each group is a strand in the supporting fabric of Narcotics Anonymous as
125 a whole; without that fabric, there would be no NA. The importance of our unity encourages
126 our groups to look to the welfare of the worldwide NA Fellowship before their own.

127 **Why is unity in Narcotics Anonymous so important?**

128 **How important is it that our groups conduct their affairs with the whole NA**

129 **Fellowship in mind?**

130 **In what ways can I place the common welfare of the NA Fellowship first?**

131 **What part do I play in the overall picture?**

132 **How do I place principles before personalities while promoting unity?**

133 The relationship described in the First Tradition is reciprocal. Groups work together in
134 a spirit of cooperation to ensure the survival of Narcotics Anonymous; in turn, those groups
135 receive strength and support from every other group and all our services. The strength of our
136 mutual commitment to NA creates the unity that binds us together in spite of all that might
137 divide us. The common welfare of NA depends on the continued growth and well being of the
138 Fellowship in every corner of the world. Our shared commitment to recovery and to our
139 common welfare gives us a personal stake in the unity of NA. In meetings, we find a new
140 place to belong, new friends, and a hope for a better life. A feeling of care and concern grows
141 between us and the group. We learn to treat others with kindness and respect and do what we
142 can to support each other and our group. Sometimes we comfort each other merely by being
143 present; at other times, a phone call or letter to say hello can make a world of difference. Our
144 relationships with other addicts are a source of strength in our personal recovery. We come to
145 rely on meetings and on each other for that support. The unity we see in our meetings is an
146 expression not only of our reliance on each other but our mutual reliance on spiritual

147 principles and a Higher Power.

148 **In what ways do I see the commitment of NA to the individual group?**

149 **What services does Narcotics Anonymous provide?**

150 **What responsibility do I share in the unity of Narcotics Anonymous?**

151 **In what way does my personal recovery depend on the unity of NA?**

152 **What can I do to better serve NA as a whole?**

153 NA unity begins with our recognition of the therapeutic value of one addict helping
154 another. We help each other in different ways. Sometimes we help each other one-on-one, as
155 in sponsorship, or we may help each other by participating in the formation of new meetings
156 to make NA accessible to more addicts. Many groups are formed when members of a more
157 established group help to start another group. Sharing the responsibility enhances our
158 common welfare and creates unity among NA members who work together. Groups flourish
159 with the loving support of addicts helping addicts. We strengthen our unity by participating in
160 each other's recovery.

161 **How can one addict helping another addict strengthen the unity of NA?**

162 **What are some ways in which I can participate in each another's recovery?**

163 **In what ways can I reach other addicts?**

164 Communication goes a long way toward building and enhancing our common welfare.
165 With an attitude of open-mindedness, we seek to understand other perspectives. Reports may
166 tell us a lot about what's happening in other groups or areas, but our common welfare depends
167 on more than just information. True communication involves an effort on our part to "listen"
168 as we read or hear reports, seeking a better understanding of the needs and problems of both
169 our own group and other groups, wherever they may be. Encouraging each member to speak

170 openly from the heart enhances our ability to work together. Regular reports, thorough
171 discussion, and active listening lead us to the kind of understanding that helps us find creative
172 solutions that benefit us all. Today's decisions may affect tomorrow's members. When we
173 think of solutions to our current problems, it's not hard to consider the needs of our group, our
174 area, our region, or even the worldwide Fellowship. But it's also important to remember the
175 "unseen member" in our discussion-the member yet to come. When we work to ensure the
176 vitality of NA, we're not working just for ourselves but for those yet to join us.

177 **Why is communication so important to us as a Fellowship?**

178 **Why is open-mindedness necessary to our common welfare?**

179 **Why is it imperative that we always have the group's conscience?**

180 **Are we thorough in our decision making processes?**

181 **Do I seek to be understood rather than to understand?**

182 **Does our group seek to serve itself rather than the addict yet to come?**

183 The unity that supports our common welfare is created not only by working together
184 but also by playing together. The friendships we develop outside meetings strengthen NA
185 unity. Fellowship activities provide opportunities for us to relax, socialize with each other,
186 and have fun. Conventions, dinners, and holiday celebrations give us a chance to celebrate our
187 recovery while practicing social skills. Picnics, dances, and sports days, for example, often
188 allow our families to participate, too. We strengthen our sense of community when we share
189 more than just meeting time. Stronger relationships develop, as we become more involved in
190 each other's lives. The care and understanding born of these relationships are strong threads in
191 the fabric of NA unity.

192 **What are some other ways to strengthen the unity of NA?**

193 **What are the ties that bind us together?**

194 **Applying spirituals principles**

195 In the Twelve Steps of NA we learn to apply principles to better our lives. Moved by
196 the miracle of personal recovery, we reach out to share that miracle with others. This is the
197 essence of being of service in NA. In supporting our unity, we first apply principles to guide
198 our own behavior. As groups, we use the same principles for guidance. That guidance creates
199 a sense of unity that strengthens our ability to reach out to others, enhancing our common
200 welfare. Some of the principles that seem particularly important to unity include surrender
201 and acceptance, commitment, selflessness, love, and anonymity. As we practice these
202 principles, we will find others who strengthen unity as well. Surrender and acceptance open
203 the door to unity. As our trust in a Higher Power grows, it gets easier to let go of our personal
204 desires and stop fighting for what we want. With an attitude of surrender, working together in
205 a group becomes easier. Tradition One presents a picture of addicts working together
206 worldwide to support each other's recovery. We try to remember this goal in all our actions,
207 as individuals or as groups. If we find that our personal desires or the aims of our group
208 conflict with that ideal, unity asks us to surrender our own desires and accept guidance that
209 enhances the greater good of Narcotics Anonymous. Only by deciding to be part of that whole
210 can we support the unity so essential to our personal survival.

211 **What does surrender mean in the context of Tradition One?**

212 **What does acceptance mean in the context of Tradition One?**

213 Commitment is another essential ingredient in unity. Personal commitment to our
214 shared sense of purpose is one of the ties that bind us together. When we know that we belong
215 in NA, and when we make a commitment to stay, we become a part of the greater whole. Our

216 sense of belonging is closely related to our degree of commitment to recovery in NA. As
217 groups, the combined strength of that commitment is a powerful force in serving others. With
218 that strong commitment, we are able to carry the message of hope that will support us all in
219 our recovery. Commitment is a decision supported by our belief in NA as a way of life.
220 Regular meeting attendance is one way in which we live out that belief. Greeting newcomers
221 as they arrive or giving our telephone number to someone who needs help also reflects our
222 decision. Sponsorship, sharing in meetings, setting up chairs before meetings—all these are
223 ways in which we express our commitment. Each member finds a level of service that fits
224 comfortably into a balanced program of recovery.

225 **What does commitment mean to me?**

226 **Have I found what I am comfortable doing in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous?**

227 **What can I do to help the addict who still suffers?**

228 **Am I giving back that which was so freely given to me?**

229 **In what other ways do I live out the belief that NA is a way of life?**

230 Selflessness is another indispensable element in unity. The principles we learn in the
231 Steps help us let go of our selfishness and lovingly serve the needs of others. To keep our
232 groups healthy, we place the needs of our group ahead of our own personal desires. The same
233 principle applies to our affairs as a group. Setting aside what we may want as a group, we
234 think about the needs of the Fellowship and seek ways to support our common good. Our
235 ability to survive as a Fellowship and to reach others depends on our unity.

236 **What does selflessness mean in the context of Tradition One?**

237 Love is a principle that is expressed in the practice of goodwill toward one another.
238 We contribute to unity in our meetings by exercising loving care in the way we speak to and

239 the way we treat one another. We try to share our experience, strength, and hope in a way,
240 which demonstrates that recovery, is available in Narcotics Anonymous. An atmosphere of
241 love and care in our meetings helps members feel comfortable and safe. The love we show
242 each other attracts newcomers and strengthens us all, fueling our sense of unity and common
243 welfare.

244 **How can I show the love I have for the Fellowship?**

245 **What is unconditional love?**

246 Anonymity, the spiritual foundation of our Traditions, supports NA unity as well.
247 When we apply anonymity to the First Tradition, we overlook the differences that would
248 separate us. In the context of unity, anonymity means that the message of recovery is for
249 every addict who wants it. We learn to set aside our prejudices and focus on our common
250 identity as addicts. Each of us has an equal right to and responsibility for the well-being of
251 Narcotics Anonymous. Just as anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Traditions, the
252 unity spoken of in the First Tradition is the practical foundation on which we may build
253 strong and successful groups. With unity as our practical foundation, we find that our
254 relationship with one another is more important than any issue that may arise to divide us. No
255 problem or disagreement is more significant than our need for each other's support. The
256 fundamental importance of our common welfare strengthens our understanding of all the
257 other Traditions. Many questions can be answered simply by determining how the action we
258 contemplate will affect the unity of the Fellowship. Will it serve to divide us, or will it bring
259 us closer together?

260 **Are we practicing anonymity in our group?**

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“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” -TRADITION TWO

277 In Narcotics Anonymous, we are concerned with protecting ourselves. Our Second
278 Tradition is an example of this. By nature, we are strong-willed, self-centered people, who are
279 thrust together in N.A. We are mismanagers and not always capable of consistently making
280 good decisions.

281 In Narcotics Anonymous, we rely on a loving God as He expresses Himself in our
282 group conscience, rather than on personal opinion or ego. By working the Steps, we learn to
283 depend on a Power greater than ourselves and to use this Power for our group purpose. We
284 must be constantly on guard that our decisions are truly an expression of God's will. There is
285 often a vast difference between group conscience and group opinion, as dictated by powerful
286 personalities or popularity. Some of our most painful growing experiences have come as a
287 result of decisions made in the name of group conscience. True spiritual principles are never
288 in conflict; they complement each other. The spiritual conscience of a group will never
289 contradict any of our Traditions.

290 The Second Tradition concerns the nature of leadership in NA. We have learned that
291 leadership by example and by selfless service works for our Fellowship. Direction and
292 manipulation fail. We choose not to have presidents, matters, or directors. Instead we have
293 secretaries, treasurers and representatives. These titles imply service rather than control. Our
294 experience shows that if a group becomes an extension of the personality of a leader or
295 member, it loses its effectiveness. An atmosphere of recovery in our groups is one of our most
296 valued assets, and we must guard it carefully, lest we lose it to politics and personalities.

297 Those of us who have been involved in service or in getting a group started sometimes
298 have a hard time letting go. Egos, unfounded pride, and self-will destroy a group if given
299 authority. We must remember that positions have been placed in trust, that we are trusted

300 servants, and that at no time do any of us govern. Narcotics Anonymous is a God-given
301 program, and we can maintain our group in dignity only with group conscience and God's
302 love.

303 Some will resist. However, many will become the role models for the newcomer. The self-
304 seekers soon find that they are on the outside, causing dissension and eventually disaster for
305 themselves. Many of them change; they learn that we can only be governed by a loving God
306 as expressed in our group conscience.

- 307 • **What is group conscience?**
- 308 • **Why is it important that we invite God into that process?**
- 309 • **What is a trusted servant?**

310 To both lead and serve simultaneously requires a delicate balance. This balance is
311 composed of many assets such as: being able to listen to the needs of the Fellowship,
312 being able to actually hear its needs, and being able to fulfill those needs.

- 313 • **Are we governed by any of our chosen leaders? Why?**
- 314 • **What is effective service?**
- 315 • **How can I serve?**
- 316 • **Who is the ultimate authority?**
- 317 • **What is the difference between ego and egotism?**
- 318 • **How can I keep my ego from interfering with the group's conscience?**
- 319 • **What is meant by unfounded pride?**
- 320 • **If self-will destroys the group, how does selflessness put us in line with a God**
321 **consciousness?**

322 • **How can I apply God consciousness in my other relationships outside the**
323 **Fellowship?**

324 Personal service arises from the application of principles. Ideally, personal service is
325 founded in a relationship with the same Higher Power that guides our personal recovery.

326 This Higher Power also guides the various elements of our fellowship. Our direction in
327 service comes from a God of our understanding, whether we serve as individuals, as a
328 group, or as a service board or committee. Whenever we come together, we seek the
329 presence and guidance of this loving Higher Power. This direction then guides us through
330 all our actions.

331 Everybody has opinions on how to serve more effectively. When we each propose a
332 different plan for any course of action, how do we choose among them? Who has the final
333 say in our discussions? Our answer is that a loving God, the source of our unity, has the
334 final say--the same Higher Power that guides our personal recovery.

335 If we are to find guidance from an ultimate authority, we need to find means of hearing
336 that guidance together. The mechanism we use is group conscience. The success of the
337 group conscience process depends on our willingness as individuals to seek guidance from
338 a Higher Power on a personal level. We then bring that guidance into the group setting.

- 339 • **What part does my Higher Power play in my service efforts?**
340 • **Why can't my service efforts be effective without practicing spiritual principles?**
341 • **Why is it so important that we reach the conscience of the group?**
342 • **How does our group decisions affect the Fellowship as a whole?**
343 • **How do my service efforts affect the Fellowship as a whole?**

344 When we practice Steps and apply principles, we develop a conscience, an awareness of
345 our behavior and its effects on others and ourselves. This conscience is a reflection of our
346 relationship with a Higher Power. It reflects the expression we receive from the God of
347 our understanding and our commitment to follow that guidance. Whenever we come
348 together in our groups and apply these same principles, a collective conscience exists.
349 Our relationship with a loving Higher Power, when consulted regularly, guides us in
350 fulfilling our primary purpose while preserving our unity and common welfare.

- 351 • **How are the principles of my personal recovery reflected in service?**
- 352 • **How am I willing to be guided by my Higher Power?**
- 353 • **How can I keep my personality out of service?**

354 Group conscience reflects a collective adherence to spiritual principles. The
355 conscience of a group takes shape and is revealed when its members take the time to talk with
356 each other about their personal needs, the needs of the group, and the needs of NA as a whole.
357 Each member draws upon his or her relationship with a Higher power when sharing with the
358 group. As members listen carefully to each other and consult their personal understanding of a
359 loving God, something happens: Solutions appear that consider the needs of everyone
360 concerned. In developing a group conscience, a clear mutual understanding or consensus
361 arises. Based upon the understanding gained by sharing group conscience, a group may move
362 on to a vote in order to make decisions.

363 Only when we listen for direction of our Higher Power are we able to hear it. The
364 conscience of a group is most clearly expressed when every member is considered an equal. A
365 Higher Power works through all of us, regardless of clean time or experience. Group
366 conscience always exists, but we are not always willing or able to hear it or allow its

367 expression. Hearing group conscience may take time and patience. A flexible approach invites
368 a loving Higher Power into our group conscience process.

369 • **Why is communication so important in group conscience?**

370 • **Why is it important that everyone be heard?**

371 • **How can we find solutions to our daily problems?**

372 • **Is clean-time a requirement for group conscience? Why?**

373 • **How important is patience in this process?**

374 • **How does group conscience contribute to unity and our common welfare?**

375 When we choose a member to serve us in some capacity, we exercise mutual trust. We
376 trust the conscience that influenced our selection since it reflects our collective relationship
377 with a loving higher Power. We extend that trust to the members we have selected to serve.
378 We have faith that they will apply principles in their actions, seek and share the most
379 complete information available, and work to further the group's well-being and our
380 fellowship's common welfare. The relationship of trusted servants to the group is reciprocal:
381 Members chosen to serve are asked to do so with dedication and fidelity, and those who've
382 chosen them are responsible to support their servants.

383 When we are asked to serve, we understand that we are responsible to a loving Higher
384 Power as expressed in the group conscience. We acknowledge this responsibility when we
385 approach service with a selfless and loving attitude. The principles embodied in the
386 Traditions apply to all of our actions. We can look to our individual conscience as well as
387 the collective conscience for guidance in all we must do in fulfilling our responsibilities.

388 This connection with the group conscience is enhanced when, as trusted servants, we
389 carry a continuous flow of information that is honest and open; it is further strengthened when

390 we seek to serve, not to govern. We help form the conscience of our group or committee,
391 through the direction of a Higher Power, by presenting a complete and unbiased stream of
392 information. The ideas and direction of the group, then, are conveyed in our representation of
393 that conscience.

394 Our trusted servants lead us best when they lead by example. Ideally, we choose them
395 for the principles of recovery we see at work in their lives. We encourage our trusted servants
396 to remain open to new ideas, to become knowledgeable about all aspects of service in NA,
397 and to continue to seek personal recovery. All these attributes are essential to their ability to
398 serve us well.

- 399 • **What should I look for when choosing a trusted servant?**
- 400 • **How do I seek my Higher Power's guidance in this decision?**
- 401 • **What part does trust and faith play in choosing a trusted servant?**
- 402 • **What is my responsibility to the trusted servant after they've been entrusted?**

403 ***Applying spiritual principles***

404 Some of the principles that seem to be important in Tradition Two include surrender,
405 faith, humility, open-mindedness, integrity, and anonymity. We begin with surrender to our
406 ultimate authority, the God of our understanding, with whom we have developed a personal
407 relationship. In this case, we surrender to the direction of that Higher Power as it is revealed
408 in our group conscience. We renew our commitment to the common welfare of NA when we
409 place the needs of the fellowship ahead of our own desires.

- 410 • **What does surrender mean in the context of Tradition Two?**
- 411 • **How do I know when I have surrendered?**
- 412 • **Why is it so important that the needs of the fellowship be met?**

413 Faith is our reliance on a loving Higher Power put into action. The application of this
414 spiritual principle lets us surrender to the group conscience with hope instead of fear. It is a
415 constant reminder that our direction comes from a Power greater than our own. We must
416 practice courage in spite of our fears. Our faith is strengthened through the experience of
417 seeing a loving Higher Power work in our fellowship.

418 • **Why is it necessary that I have faith in this process?**

419 • **What happens when I trust our Higher Power?**

420 • **What is my definition of faith?**

421 Humility in practice is the honest assessment of our strengths and weaknesses. That
422 kind of assessment is a necessary principle in our willingness to surrender. Humility prepares
423 us to set aside our personal wishes so that we can effectively serve our fellowship. We look to
424 humility, first, to remind us that we aren't personally capable of guiding the affairs of
425 Narcotics Anonymous. We are reminded of our source of strength: a loving Higher Power.

426 • **What is humility in this context?**

427 • **Why is humility so important in our group conscience?**

428 • **How are my strengths and weaknesses shown through humility?**

429 By practicing humility in our efforts to serve, we make room for open-mindedness.
430 We remember that, just as we need the experience of other addicts to recover, so do we need
431 their direction and ideas in order to serve. We learn to actively cultivate our listening skills,
432 using our ears more than our mouths in conversation. When we are open-minded, we hear and
433 accept solutions offered by others in the development of group conscience. Application of this
434 principle teaches us to set aside our prejudices in order to work with others. By practicing
435 open-mindedness, we nurture an attitude of goodwill toward others and become willing to

436 serve with our common good in mind. Only with an open mind can we recognize the guidance
437 of a loving Higher Power.

- 438 • **What is the role of open-mindedness in a group conscience?**
- 439 • **How is listening the key to open-mindedness?**
- 440 • **What part does humility play in open-mindedness?**
- 441 • **How does being open-minded take me out of self?**

442 Integrity is the consistent application of spiritual principles, no matter what the
443 circumstances. Leaders who demonstrate this quality inspire our trust. We serve best when we
444 display an honest respect for the trust placed in us by others. Fidelity and devotion to that trust
445 reflect the personal integrity of our servants. When we choose members to serve us, we often
446 look for integrity as a sign that they are trustworthy.

- 447 • **What is integrity?**
- 448 • **How do I know when I am practicing integrity?**
- 449 • **What part does honesty play in integrity?**

450 The spiritual principle of anonymity reminds us that we are all equal in Narcotics
451 Anonymous. No one member or group has a monopoly on knowledge of a Higher Power's
452 will. We practice anonymity by offering our love, attention, and respect to everyone,
453 regardless of our personal feelings toward any individual. Every member has a part in the
454 development of group conscience. We are all equal in the expression of a conscious contact
455 with a Higher Power of our understanding.

- 456 • **What is the relationship between anonymity and the group conscience?**
- 457 • **How do I practice anonymity in the context of Tradition Two?**
- 458 • **Who has a part in making up a group conscience?**

459 Tradition Two offers guidance for our relationship with others. A loving Higher Power
460 is the source of direction for NA as a whole. This Higher Power is also the source of the
461 principles that we apply when we serve. We can use these principles when we seek direction
462 as individuals, groups, service boards, or committees.

463 Service is for those we serve. Our best talents in service are the ability to reach other
464 addicts, to offer identification and welcome, to greet the addict walking in the door for the
465 first time, and to help ensure that newcomers return again and again. Any one of us is capable
466 of offering that service. With the guidance of a loving Higher Power, we become better able
467 to help others.

468 Service to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has its own rewards. When we
469 practice spiritual principles in our daily lives, a stronger relationship with our Higher Power
470 develops. Our relationship with our group and the fellowship grows stronger, too. Service in
471 NA is a learning experience that allows us personal growth. We begin to look beyond our own
472 interests, setting aside our self-centered view of life in order to better serve the whole. We
473 benefit spiritually in return for our unselfish service.

- 474 • **What does selfless service mean to me?**
- 475 • **Who benefits from my service efforts?**
- 476 • **In what ways am I benefited spiritually?**

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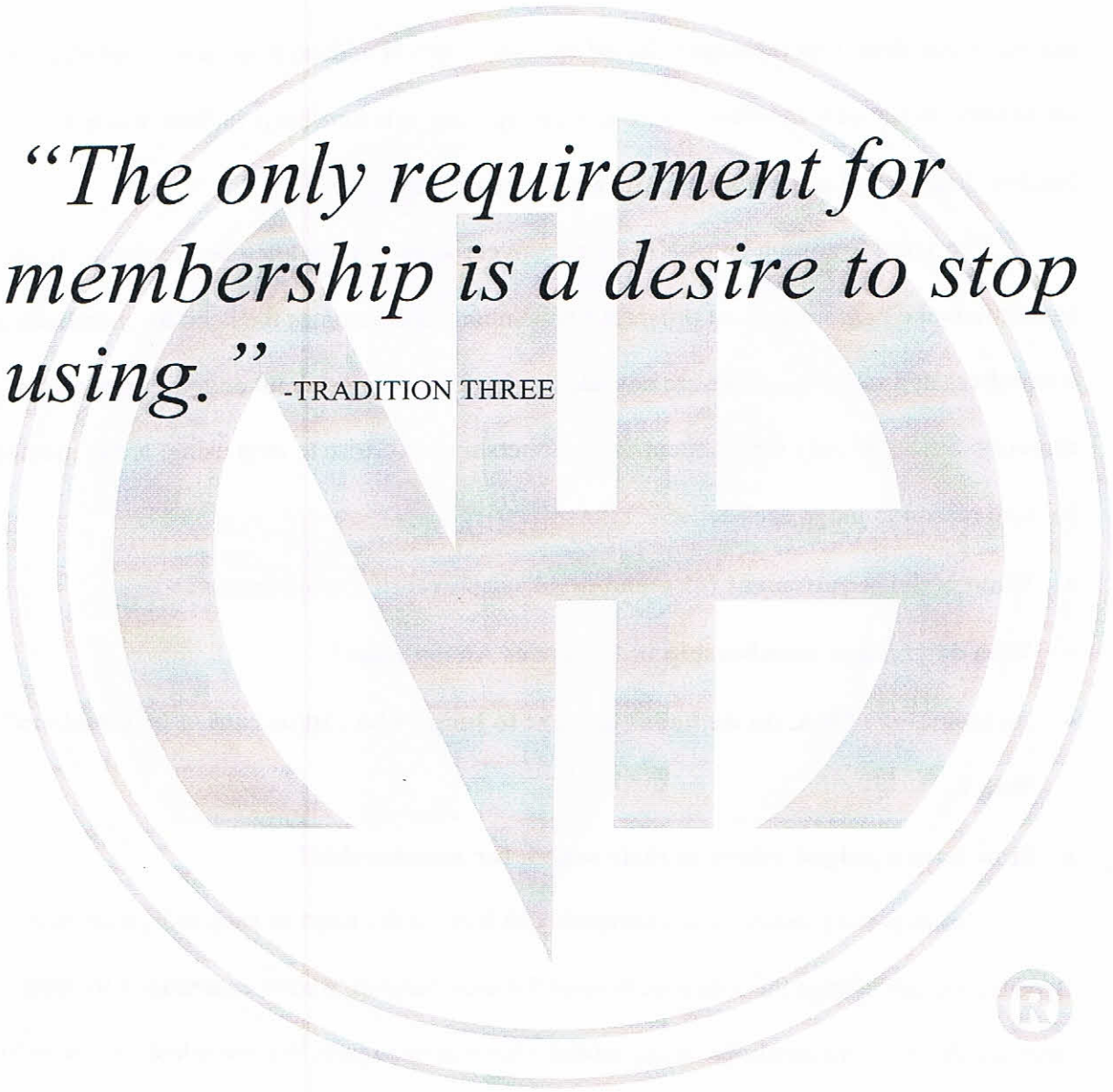
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491 *“The only requirement for*
492 *membership is a desire to stop*
493 *using.”* -TRADITION THREE

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510 Desire is the key word; desire is the basis of our recovery. Narcotics Anonymous
511 offers recovery to addicts around the world. We focus on the disease of addiction rather than
512 any particular drug. Our message is broad enough to attract addicts from any social class or
513 nationality. When new members come to meetings, our sole interest is in their desire for
514 freedom from active addiction and how we can be of help.

515 The Third Tradition helps NA offer recovery to so many addicts by freeing us from
516 having to make judgment about prospective members. It eliminates the need for membership
517 committees or applications. We are not asked to make decisions about anyone's fitness for
518 recovery. Since the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using, we as members
519 have no reason to judge each other.

- 520 • **What is the requirement for membership in Narcotics Anonymous?**
521 • **Who determines membership in Narcotics Anonymous?**
522 • **As members of NA, do we have the right to judge who can or cannot be members?**
523 **Why?**
524 • **How have I judged others in their search for membership?**

525 Desire is not a measurable commodity. It lives in the heart of each individual member.
526 Because we can't judge the sole requirement for membership, we are encouraged to open
527 wide the doors of our meetings to any addict who wishes to join. We are asked to extend to
528 others the care and concern that helped each of us find a sense of belonging. The Third
529 Tradition helps NA grow by encouraging us to welcome others unconditionally.

- 530 • **What happens when I try to measure the desire of others?**

- 531 • **Who decides if I can be a member in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 532 • **How does the Fellowship grow as a result of the Third Tradition?**
- 533 • **How can I extend care and concern to foster a sense of belonging in newcomers?**

534 Membership is a personal decision reached by each individual. We can do a lot to
535 allow addicts the freedom to make that decision and reaffirm their commitment to recovery.
536 We can help them feel comfortable in our groups by greeting them at the door, sharing with
537 them before or after the meeting, and exchanging telephone numbers. We try to make sure
538 that any addict who attends our meeting is not turned away. To the extent that it's possible,
539 we choose the most accessible location for our meetings. We choose a format that reflects an
540 invitational tone to everyone regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of
541 religion. Most of all, we encourage every addict to keep coming back.

- 542 • **Why is it so important that I generate an atmosphere of recovery?**
- 543 • **What is an invitational tone?**
- 544 • **What part can I play in this process?**
- 545 • **What are some other things I can do to help the newcomer feel welcome?**

546 The strength of any member's desire is not necessarily connected to any outside
547 circumstance. What makes one addict stay clean while another returns to using? No one of us
548 can judge whom will stay to recover and whom will return to active addiction. There are no
549 guarantees based on types of drugs used or using history. We cannot predict a higher success
550 rate for addicts of a certain age, or those who used for a certain number of years, or women
551 over men, or any other external factor. Just as we are not capable of measuring another's
552 desire to stay clean, neither are we equipped to decide who should join. We offer welcome
553 instead of judgment.

- 554 • **Why are members backgrounds not a factor in their chances for recovery?**
- 555 • **What happens when I place expectations on another's chance for recovery?**
- 556 • **Does it matter what my drug of choice was? Why?**
- 557 • **Why is it impossible for me to determine who will stay clean?**

558 We look for ways to help, we encourage each other not to judge. Our task is to fan the
559 flame of desire, not dampen it. Any addict who walks into a meeting, even a using addict,
560 displays a level of willingness that cannot be discounted. While maintaining an emphasis on
561 the importance of total abstinence, still-using addicts are welcomed into our meetings with
562 special encouragement to keep coming back. Many recovering addicts do not have access to
563 regular meetings because of incarceration, geography, physical disability, or employment.
564 These addicts are members in every respect as long as they have the desire to stop using, and
565 they are entitled to the same consideration and support as any other member.

566 Addicts attend their first meeting for many reasons. Our motives for coming to NA
567 aren't particularly important. The desire to stop using may not be clearly realized; it may be
568 no more than a subtle yearning for relief from pain. But that yearning often drives us to seek
569 solutions we might otherwise never consider. Often the experience of hearing other addicts
570 share about recovery will ignite the desire to stop using. Others come to a meeting, hear the
571 message, and return to active addiction. Those who return to meetings after relapse often say
572 their desire to stop using was born from the pain of relapse. We come to NA for many
573 reasons, but we stay to recover when we find and keep the desire to stop using.

- 574 • **Why doesn't it matter how we get to Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 575 • **How do honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness figure into a desire to stop using?**
- 576 • **Who is welcome to attend our meetings?**

577 The group is not the jury of desire. We cannot measure or arbitrate willingness. Any
578 addict's willingness to come to a meeting ought to be a sufficient indication of desire. It may
579 take a while for an addict to find the desire that will keep her or him in Narcotics Anonymous.
580 No addict should be denied an opportunity to stay long enough to develop that desire. We can
581 nurture that desire with loving acceptance.

582 The wording of the Third Tradition reflects the broad focus of our First Step. It's
583 written simply enough to include addicts of all countries and cultures, no matter what drugs
584 they used. Before finding recovery in NA, many addicts don't think that alcohol is a problem.
585 Others abuse prescription medication, thinking that "legal" drugs are okay. Because of the
586 wording of this Tradition, we are able to attract and welcome addicts who might think they
587 didn't use the "right" drugs to qualify for membership in NA. Each addict should be allowed
588 to decide if NA is the answer for him or herself. We cannot make the decision for others.

- 589 • **Why doesn't can the group do to help in the process of desire for new members?**
- 590 • **Does the group have the right to decide who can or cannot be a member?**

591 Many of us know when we walk into our first meeting that we're addicts. It's not
592 something we have to decide; it's a fact of life. Membership, however, means more than just
593 being an addict; it means making a decision. If we identify with what we hear in NA and
594 relate with the people we meet, we will want what NA offers. So long as we have a desire to
595 stop using, we are free to make the decision to join Narcotics Anonymous. Then, once we've
596 made that decision, we need to follow it with a commitment to the principles of NA. With that
597 commitment, we set ourselves squarely on the road of recovery.

- 598 • **What does being a member of Narcotics Anonymous mean to me?**
- 599 • **What does commitment mean in the context of the Third Tradition?**

- 600 • **Why is it important for me to continue to identify myself as an addict?**

601 **Applying spiritual principles**

602 The Third Tradition encourages freedom from judgment. It leads us on the path of
603 service toward an attitude of helpfulness, acceptance, and unconditional love. As we've seen
604 in the previous Traditions, our path of service arises from the application of principles. Some
605 of the principles that support this Tradition include tolerance, compassion, anonymity, and
606 humility.

607 Tolerance reminds us that judgment is not our task. The disease of addiction does not exclude
608 anyone. NA, likewise, cannot exclude any addict who desires to stop using. We learn to be
609 tolerant of addicts from different backgrounds than ours, remembering that we are not better
610 than any other addict in a meeting.

611 Addiction is a deadly disease. We know that addicts who don't find recovery can
612 expect nothing better than jails, institutions, and death. Refusing admission to any addict,
613 even one who comes merely out of curiosity, may be a death sentence for that addict. We
614 learn to practice tolerance of addicts who don't look like us, think like us, or share like us. We
615 teach by example. Pressuring new members to talk or act like we do may send them back to
616 the streets. It certainly denies them the right to recover and learn in their own way.

- 617 • **How can we practice tolerance as a group?**
- 618 • **What does tolerance mean to me as a member?**
- 619 • **What can I do as a member to show tolerance?**
- 620 • **How can intolerance affect both the individual and the group as a whole?**

621 Compassion lends kindness to all our efforts in service to others. With compassion as
622 the foundation of our actions, we learn to support members through any difficulties they may

623 experience. All too often, we are quick to judge the quality of another's recovery or
624 willingness. Tradition Three asks us to set aside our self-righteousness. Because the only
625 requirement for membership is a quality we cannot measure, the right to judge another's
626 desire is denied us. Our attitude ought to be one of loving acceptance toward all addicts,
627 regardless of any other problems they may experience. Generous application of compassion is
628 more therapeutic to the suffering addict than a free application of judgment.

- 629 • **In what ways can I show compassion to those with a desire to stop using?**
- 630 • **What is compassion in the context of Tradition Three?**
- 631 • **What is unconditional love?**
- 632 • **Why is it so important that I show compassion?**

633 Humility reminds us that we are not God; we cannot predict another's readiness to
634 hear the message. We try to remember our own fear and confusion in our first meeting. We
635 need each other's help and encouragement, not criticism or rejection. Our awareness of our
636 own shortcomings, exercised in humility, helps us remember this. The self-acceptance that
637 often accompanies humility makes us reluctant to judge others harshly.

- 638 • **What was it like for me when I came to my first meeting?**
- 639 • **What part does humility play in Tradition Three?**
- 640 • **How does knowing my own shortcoming help me see others in a different light?**

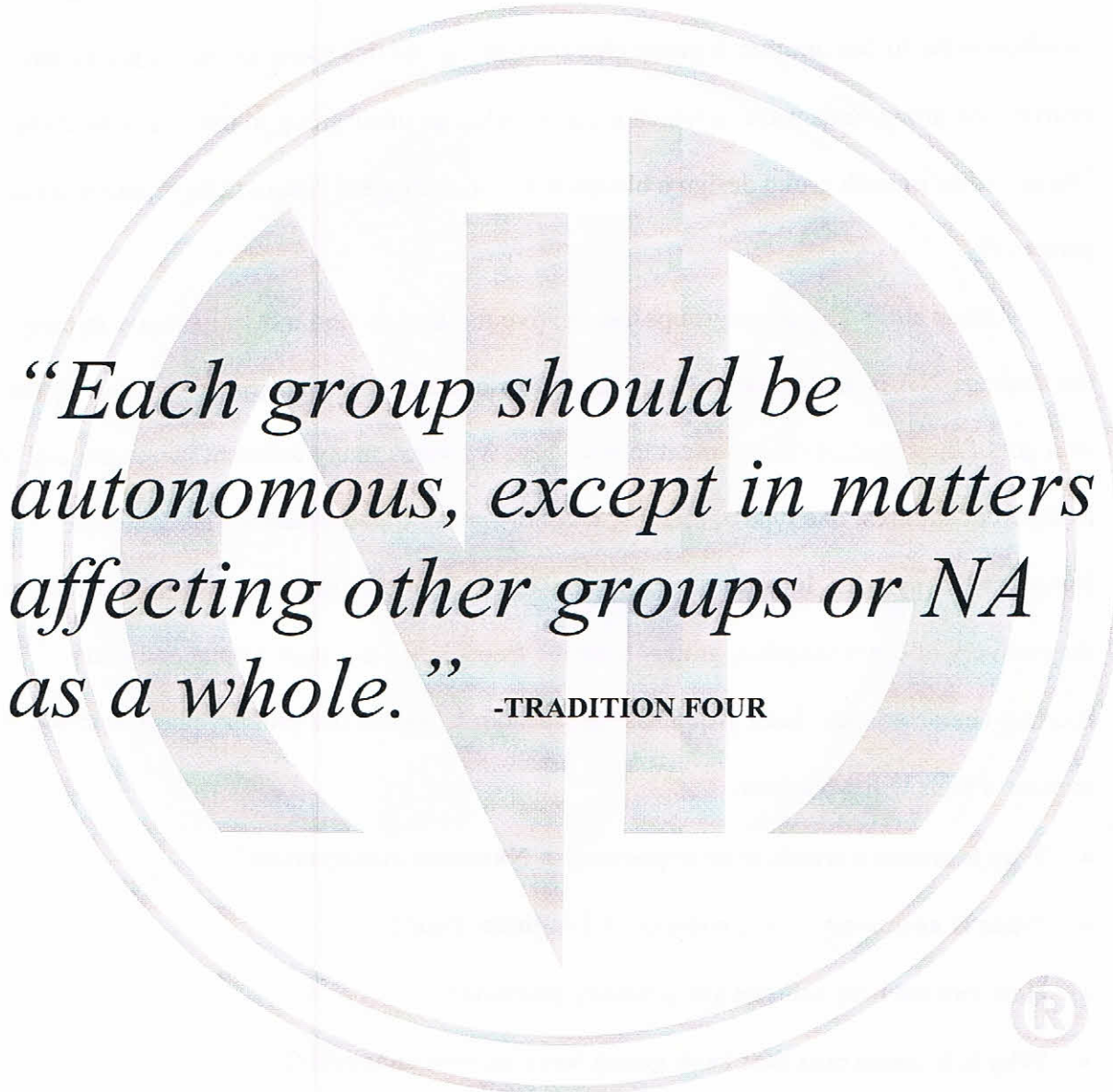
641 Anonymity is the principle that supports the openness of our groups and our freedom
642 to welcome everyone as equals. NA has no classes of membership and no second-class
643 members. The common denominator in NA is the disease of addiction. We are all equally
644 subject to its devastation. We share an equal right to recovery.

645 The practice of anonymity ensures the integrity of Tradition Three. In the spirit of
646 anonymity, we remember that no individual member or group is more important than the
647 message we carry. The single requirement for membership helps ensure that no addict need
648 die without having a chance to recover. We celebrate our equality and the freedom we share
649 by welcoming any addict who has the desire to stop using.

650 Tradition Three spells freedom for the members of NA. It sets the sole requirement for
651 membership in the heart of each individual member. We don't have to decide for anyone else.
652 We don't have to expend time and energy on deciding who should stay or who we should
653 help. Instead, we are free to extend loving assistance to anyone who walks into a meeting
654 desiring freedom from addiction.

- 655 • **How does anonymity apply to the Third Tradition?**
- 656 • **What can I do to ensure that anonymity is applied?**
- 657 • **Why is anonymity so important to the Traditions?**

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*“Each group should be
autonomous, except in matters
affecting other groups or NA
as a whole.”* **-TRADITION FOUR**

689 Through working the Steps, we learn that with freedom comes responsibility. In
690 recovery, we become responsible for ourselves. As we accept that responsibility, we see how
691 Tradition Four encourages us to act responsibly as groups and as a Fellowship. NA groups
692 are vehicles for the message of recovery. In the strength of the personal commitment group
693 members make to one another, a group character forms. As this group character grows and
694 evolves, the group finds ways in which it can do what no other group in town may be doing.
695 The members of each group design a blueprint for meetings that reflect that particular group's
696 personality.

697 Group autonomy gives groups the creative freedom to find individual ways to carry
698 the message. NA is made up of a vastly diverse assortment of addicts joined together by the
699 strength of their mutual commitment to recovery. We speak many different languages and live
700 in different cultures; one type of meeting will not appeal to every addict who comes to
701 Narcotics Anonymous. In order to reach every addict who may need our help and to support
702 the recovery of every member, groups have the freedom to vary their format and other
703 meeting characteristics. Each group has the freedom to pursue our primary purpose in the
704 manner it feels will work best.

- 705 • **Why is creative freedom so important in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 706 • **What is autonomy in the context of Tradition Four?**
- 707 • **How can we best achieve our primary purpose?**
- 708 • **Why is it important that each group have its own character?**
- 709 • **Being as diverse of a Fellowship as we are, why is it important that we vary in format**
710 **in our groups?**

711 Every group has a niche to fill both in the Fellowship as a whole and in the local NA
712 community. As a Fellowship, our ability to reach still-using addicts is tied to our willingness
713 to offer meetings that are accessible and attractive to those addicts. With the creative freedom
714 offered by autonomy, we are encouraged to seek the particular role that meets the needs of
715 both the NA community and our own group. We are free to make each group the very best it
716 can be. The vitality of Narcotics Anonymous is enhanced by each group's willingness to find
717 its niche and fill it.

718 Creative freedom challenges the groups to be strong and responsible. Members may
719 support many meetings with their attendance, but most make a commitment to support one
720 group in particular. Members grow in their personal recovery when they take responsibility
721 for their lives. In the same way groups grow and become stronger when their members take
722 collective responsibility for maintaining their meetings. Groups reflect the responsibility and
723 commitment of their members.

- 724 • **What parts do responsibility and commitment play in the group?**
- 725 • **Why is it important that I participate in my home group?**
- 726 • **In what ways does the group reflect the commitment of its members?**
- 727 • **How does our group seek to attract members from its surrounding community?**

728 One of the most common ways in which groups express their autonomy is in the
729 choice of meeting format. Most NA communities will offer a number of different types of
730 meetings, from speaker meetings to Step studies to topic discussion or any other format or
731 combination of formats that meets the needs of local members. Some meetings will be open to
732 the public, while others will be for addicts only. Larger communities may offer several
733 different types of meetings each night. Some addicts will hear the message of recovery better

734 in one type of meeting, while others prefer another format. An NA community that offers a
735 variety of meetings is more likely to reach a broad cross-section of addicts. In a spirit of
736 cooperation, we try to respect the autonomy of other groups by allowing them the freedom to
737 carry the message in whatever manner seems best to them.

738 In the spirit of autonomy, many groups hold meetings that appeal to members with similar
739 needs. The freedom from judgement expressed in the Third Tradition is aimed at helping any
740 addict anywhere feel comfortable in NA. No matter how a group structures its meetings, all
741 NA groups are encouraged to keep their focus, recovery from the disease of addiction. As long
742 as a group observes the Twelve Traditions and espouses the Twelve Steps of NA in its
743 meetings, it may consider them Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

- 744 • **How is autonomy expressed in the NA group?**
- 745 • **Why is it important that each group forms its own identity?**
- 746 • **What is the focus of NA groups?**
- 747 • **What are the guidelines that each group must follow to be called a NA meeting?**

748 Sometimes it's hard to know what affects NA as a whole. The Fourth Tradition offers
749 a way to balance the freedom of autonomy with our responsibility to preserve NA unity. We
750 are challenged in Tradition Four to apply autonomy in ways that will enhance the growth and
751 vitality of NA. Autonomy encourages groups to become strong and lively but also reminds
752 them that they are a vital part of a greater whole: the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.
753 We consider our common welfare when we make decisions in our groups.

754 Since most groups are not directly connected with each other, we might think that
755 whatever happens in our meetings has no effect on anyone else. When we consider whom our
756 group affects, we have to look at other groups, the addict yet to come, the newcomer, and the

757 neighborhood in which we hold our meetings. We have an effect on other groups or NA as a
758 whole if we're not recognizable as an NA meeting. It helps to remember what we needed to
759 hear when we were new: hope for recovery from drug addiction. Addicts first coming to NA
760 often look closely for differences, hoping that somehow they won't fit in. It's not difficult to
761 alienate an addict. It's important to think about the message we send to newcomers in our
762 meetings. Thoughtful consideration of our primary purpose may help ensure that meetings
763 will be available for those addicts yet to come.

- 764 • **As groups, how do we know what affects Narcotics Anonymous as a whole?**
- 765 • **In what ways do we address issues that affect NA as a whole?**
- 766 • **What can we do to ensure that the Fellowship is not affected?**
- 767 • **Why are our decision-making processes so important?**
- 768 • **What part does affective communication play in a group?**

769 It's also important to consider how we're viewed by society. When NA meetings first
770 began in many places, it was illegal for addicts to meet under any circumstances. Even where
771 meetings are legal, the public often views groups of addicts with alarm. Until NA has
772 established a good public reputation, it may be difficult for addicts to find meeting places. If
773 our behavior as NA members is still destructive and selfish, we will once again have difficulty
774 meeting openly. We help protect our reputation as a Fellowship when we use our meeting
775 facilities with respect, keeping them clean and in good repair. We should take care to act like
776 good neighbors, conducting ourselves respectfully. Even something as simple as the name a
777 group chooses may reflect on NA as a whole. If the public reputation of Narcotics
778 Anonymous is somehow impaired, addicts may die.

779 Autonomy does not relieve groups of their obligation to observe and apply the
780 spiritual principles embodied in the Traditions. Careful consideration of the group's
781 observation of the Fourth Tradition often takes the form of a group inventory, helping
782 members gauge their success at carrying the message and reaching addicts in their
783 neighborhood. At the same time, groups can examine their part in contributing to the unity of
784 NA as a whole. The Fourth Tradition guides us away from self-centeredness by giving us the
785 freedom to act responsibly as groups.

- 786 • **Why is the image of NA so important in the community?**
- 787 • **Who is responsible for portraying that image?**
- 788 • **What can we do as individual members to help in this process?**
- 789 • **Why is a group inventory so important?**
- 790 • **How can we benefit from a group inventory?**

791 **Applying spiritual principles**

792 The Fourth Tradition helps groups achieve a balance between independence and
793 responsibility. This mirrors the freedom of the individual recovering member and the
794 responsibility, which supports that freedom. Together with open-mindedness, unity, and
795 anonymity, these principles help protect NA as a whole when applied in our group affairs.

796 While autonomy gives us certain freedoms, it also implies responsibility for our
797 actions and for the continued well being of NA. As groups, we exercise our responsibility to
798 the Fellowship by taking inventory of our behavior and how we hold our meetings. Our group
799 exercises its autonomy in a responsible way when it takes care to consider the common
800 welfare of the Fellowship as a whole before it acts.

- 801 • **What is the balance we seek between independence and responsibility?**

- 802 • **What can we as members do to show responsibility for the Fellowship as a whole?**
803 • **How can excessive autonomy have a negative effect on other groups or NA as a**
804 **whole?**

805 Open-mindedness is essential if we are to use autonomy to help NA grow. With an
806 open-minded attitude, we are more receptive to new ways of reaching addicts. We learn to
807 find and fill our niche in the NA community. We encourage each member of the group to
808 contribute thoughts and ideals. Our attitude of open-mindedness helps us remember that each
809 group is part of something bigger than ourselves and prompts us to look at still more new
810 ideas. Our diversity can enrich us only when we are open to its richness.

811 Remembering our part in the greater whole, we consider unity when we think about
812 applying the Fourth Tradition. Any decision that we make as an autonomous group ought to
813 be founded first in our common welfare.

- 814 • **What are some of the effects of closed-mindedness?**
815 • **What is the importance of open-mindedness in our group's decisions?**
816 • **What can we do as members to ensure the unity of NA as a whole?**

817 Love is the principle that guides us to see NA as a greater whole. This impacts our
818 responsibility as autonomous groups. Our group's autonomous decisions, based on our love
819 for NA, will serve to strengthen our efforts to serve others. Love encourages us to reach out to
820 other members and other groups, finding ways to cooperate with them in carrying the message
821 of recovery.

- 822 • **What part does love play in the Fourth Tradition?**
823 • **In what ways can we show our love as members? As groups?**

824 Anonymity applied to the Fourth Tradition reminds us that each group has an equal
825 place in the Fellowship of NA. Larger groups are not more important than smaller groups;
826 older groups are not “better” than newer groups. While all groups have the freedom to apply
827 principles in whatever ways seem best to them, those same principles make each group an
828 equal partner in recovery. Each group bears an equal responsibility in the work and in the
829 reputation of NA.

830 Autonomy in NA gives groups the freedom to act on their own to establish an
831 atmosphere of recovery, serve their members, and fulfill our primary purpose. The
832 responsibility that balances our autonomy reflects the principles expressed in the first three
833 Traditions. Preserving the unity of the NA Fellowship comes first. Next, we seek direction
834 from a loving Higher Power. Then, we hold meetings that welcome everyone with a desire to
835 stop using.

836 Healthy, vital groups are essential to the growth of Narcotics Anonymous. Groups
837 provide a place where we can offer our basic service: one addict reaching out to another with
838 the message of recovery. Without our autonomous groups, we would be unable to fulfill our
839 primary purpose.

- 840 • **How does anonymity apply to the Fourth Tradition?**
- 841 • **Why isn't one group more important than another group?**
- 842 • **What part does each group play in the overall reputation of NA as a whole?**
- 843 • **Having the freedom to run our groups as we please; how important is it that we stay**
844 **within the confines of the Traditions of NA?**
- 845 • **How can we preserve the unity of NA?**
- 846 • **What part does our Higher Power play in this process?**

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*“Each group has but one
primary purpose—to carry the
message to the addict who still
suffers.”*

-TRADITION FIVE



866 Our primary purpose is at the heart of our service. With guidance from a loving
867 Higher Power and a clear focus on this purpose, NA groups become a channel for the healing
868 power of recovery. Narcotics Anonymous exists to help addicts find freedom from active
869 addiction. If we were to espouse other ideas or pursue other goals, our focus would be blurred
870 and our energies diminished. The Fifth Tradition asks us to practice integrity by keeping our
871 purpose foremost.

872 What is the message that we are asked to carry? Groups carry the message of NA:
873 hope and freedom from active addition. This message may be voiced in many ways.
874 Sometimes we simply share that if we won't use any drugs, we won't get loaded. Other
875 members share that they have found satisfying, productive lives in recovery. Sometimes the
876 message we share is that, even though life may be painful, we can stay clean. The spiritual
877 awakening we experience when we work the Steps is also our message. When addicts
878 experience the message of recovery, we find healing from our suffering. No matter what the
879 cause, we can live drug-free and establish new lives. That is our message: that an addict, any
880 addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.

- 881 • **What is the primary purpose of NA?**
- 882 • **As a member, what is the message that I carry?**
- 883 • **In what ways can I best carry this message?**
- 884 • **Do I limit who I carry the message to?**
- 885 • **What is the role of the group in carrying a clear message?**

886 The groups' focus on carrying the message is so important to the survival of NA that it
887 is called our primary purpose. That means it is the most important thing we do. Nothing ought

888 to take precedence over it. This is the most basic guideline by which groups may examine
889 their motives and their actions.

890 There are many ways in which groups can further our primary purpose. Generally
891 speaking, group members start by creating an atmosphere of recovery in their meetings. This
892 includes extending a welcome to every addict who attends. Stable meetings that start on time
893 carry a message of recovery. Effective meeting formats keep the primary focus and encourage
894 members to participate in a way that expresses recovery. We lead by example, sharing
895 experience instead of advice. Group members help further our purpose when they take
896 personal responsibility for keeping the meeting recovery oriented. All of our actions convey a
897 message, and Tradition Five reminds us to make it a message of recovery.

- 898 • **What is the message that we carry as a group?**
- 899 • **How can we best carry the message of recovery?**
- 900 • **As members, what can we do to further our primary purpose?**
- 901 • **How important is it that the group and I portray a positive image in NA?**
- 902 • **How do we keep in check our actions and examine our motives?**

903 Many distracting influences can divert us from our primary purpose. But each time our
904 focus is diverted from our primary purpose, the addict seeking recovery loses out. Other
905 influences can distort our group's focus on its primary purpose. From the money members
906 contribute, our groups pay rent on their meeting space, buy literature and supplies, conduct
907 activities, and support NA services. All of these can either help further our primary purpose or
908 distract us from our focus. Some groups seek to outdo others with luxurious meeting spaces,
909 extravagant refreshments, huge supplies of literature, and elaborate activities. When we do
910 this, our focus is distracted away from our primary purpose and onto money, property, and

911 prestige. We should try to establish a reputation for carrying the message—nothing more,
912 nothing less. Money, literature, and meeting space are tools we can use to help us carry the
913 message; however, they should serve us, not rule us.

- 914 • **What are some of the distractions that will divert us from our primary purpose?**
- 915 • **How do we determine when we are being lead down that path of distraction?**
- 916 • **How have I seen my group distracted from its primary purpose?**
- 917 • **What can we do as groups to avoid these distractions?**
- 918 • **How can I as a member contribute to avoiding these distractions?**
- 919 • **How can we best use the tools available to us to help us serve well?**

920 The group can provide many services to carry the message. Our primary service is the
921 NA meeting, where addicts share their recovery directly with one another. Additional services
922 like Phonelines, Public Information work, and Hospitals & Institution panels also help carry
923 the message. In rural areas and newer NA communities, groups are sometimes the only source
924 of such services. However, most groups find they cannot maintain their focus on their
925 recovery meetings and also carry out other services. For this reason, groups usually assign
926 responsibility for such services to their area committees. That way, groups reserve their time
927 and energy for carrying the message directly to the addict who still suffers.

928 Because carrying the message is so important, many groups take inventory
929 periodically to help ensure that our primary purpose is still in focus. The Twelve Traditions
930 may be used as an outline for a group inventory. Some groups use a specific set of inventory
931 questions, such as:

- 932 • **How well are we carrying the message of recovery?**
- 933 • **What addicts are not being reached by our group?**

- 934 • **How can we make our meetings more accessible?**
- 935 • **What can we do to make all members feel more welcome?**
- 936 • **Has the atmosphere of recovery diminished?**
- 937 • **Would a change in our meeting format strengthen that atmosphere?**

938 Considering the needs of the larger NA community may lead to other changes. For
939 instance, if there are no Step meetings in one town, a group may consider having meetings
940 that focus on the Steps. There are many ways to carry the message and meet the needs of both
941 the group and the NA community.

942 Tradition Five focuses the group's priority on carrying the message. Members can do
943 many things to further our primary purpose. When members come together as a group to
944 undertake the task of carrying the message, they offer an attractive picture of recovery in
945 action.

946 Many meetings are structured to carry the message to our newest members. These new
947 members often need more encouragement to stay, more answers to their questions, more of
948 our love and care. But the newest members are not the only addicts who need the message of
949 recovery. The still-suffering addict with whom we share our hope may be any one of us,
950 regardless of clean time. Tradition Five is not limited to helping newcomers. The message of
951 recovery is for all of us.

- 952 • **Does our group set aside time to study the Steps and Traditions?**
- 953 • **Why is it so important that we not exclude any addict seeking recovery?**
- 954 • **Why is it so important that we consider the needs of the whole NA community?**
- 955 • **What can we do as groups to make NA attractive to the still suffering addict?**

- 956 • **How does the group carry the message to more experienced members who have**
957 **drifted away?**
- 958 • **In what ways have I thought I had outgrown the NA program?**

959 **Applying spiritual principles**

960 The Fifth Tradition complements the Twelfth Step; it asks groups to carry the message
961 to addicts. As individuals, we are asked in the Steps to apply principles in all our affairs; this
962 is also important in our actions as groups.

- 963 • **How are Tradition Five and Step Twelve tied together?**
- 964 • **What does the phrase “spiritual awakening” mean to me and how does it apply to**
965 **Tradition Five?**

966 Some of the principles we have applied to help us observe the Fifth Tradition include
967 integrity, responsibility, unity, and anonymity. Integrity, or fidelity to the spiritual principles
968 embodied in the Twelve Traditions, is demonstrated when groups carry the NA message of
969 recovery. Many of our members have much to offer on a variety of subjects, but our
970 Fellowship has its own special message: freedom from active addiction through practice of
971 NA’s Twelve Steps and the support of the Fellowship of recovering addicts. Groups
972 demonstrate this when they offer vigorous, conscious support for addicts seeking to work the
973 NA program. When groups conscientiously cultivate this kind of integrity, their meetings
974 further our primary purpose.

- 975 • **What is integrity?**
- 976 • **How do I practice integrity in my group?**
- 977 • **What can I hope to achieve through integrity?**
- 978 • **What part does integrity play in Tradition Five?**

979 Tradition Five gives our groups a great responsibility: to maintain our Fellowship's
980 primary purpose. Each group is responsible to become as effective a vehicle for carrying the
981 NA message as it can be. Allowing our groups to lose sight of our primary purpose may
982 deprive an addict of a chance to hear our message of hope. Each member is responsible to
983 help the group keep our primary purpose in focus.

- 984 • **Why is it my responsibility as a member to make sure that our primary purpose is**
- 985 **kept?**
- 986 • **How can I show that responsibility?**
- 987 • **What is the responsibility of the group?**
- 988 • **How does the group that responsibility to the Fellowship of NA as a whole?**

989 Unity is one of our greatest strengths in carrying the message. Unity of purpose keeps
990 our focus on carrying the message. As groups, we work together to ensure not only our own
991 personal recovery but also the recovery of every NA member. The evidence of many addicts
992 staying clean and seeking our common good is very persuasive. We don't recover alone.

- 993 • **What part does unity play in the Tradition Five?**
- 994 • **Who is responsible for the unity of NA?**
- 995 • **What can I do as a member to maintain unity in my group?**
- 996 • **What can my group do to maintain the unity of NA as a whole?**
- 997 • **Why is it important for my group to actively participate in the Area Service**
- 998 **Committee and its various subcommittees?**

999 In anonymity, our personal differences are insignificant compared to our primary
1000 purpose. When we come together as a group, our first task is to carry the message; all else

1001 ought to be set aside. Groups can practice the Fifth Tradition by reminding their members that
1002 the recovery message, not individual personalities, is primary in Narcotics Anonymous.

- 1003 • **What is the importance of anonymity?**
- 1004 • **What does anonymity mean in the context of Tradition Five?**
- 1005 • **Why is the message more important than the messenger?**
- 1006 • **What can I do to maintain anonymity in the group as well as the Fellowship at large?**
- 1007 • **How does anonymity apply in the context of service to the Fellowship?**
- 1008 • **Why should we bring our skills to service work but leave behind our titles?**

1009 Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship with meetings around the world. Our primary
1010 purpose is a common thread that unites us. Tradition Five defines the focus of Narcotics
1011 Anonymous. This focus also helps to ensure our survival as a Fellowship. The Fifth Tradition
1012 asks us to serve other addicts by carrying the message that recovery is possible in Narcotics
1013 Anonymous. This concentrated focus protects the integrity of our fellowship.

- 1014 • **What can I do to maintain our Fellowship's focus?**
- 1015 • **What can we do as a group to maintain our primary purpose?**
- 1016 • **Where does the final responsibility lie?**

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“An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.” -TRADITION SIX

1041 While each group has but one primary purpose, there are many ways to fulfill that
1042 purpose. Our groups often go to great lengths to carry the message. We carry out our primary
1043 purpose as individuals, as groups, and through our service structure. In carrying the message,
1044 groups come in contact with other organizations in their areas. Good public relations can help
1045 our groups better fulfill their primary purpose, but cooperation with other organizations can
1046 also lead to conflict, diverting our groups from carrying the message. Tradition Six tempers
1047 our zeal to carry the message, establishing boundaries for our relations with others in the area.

- 1048 • **What are some ways that we can carry the message?**
- 1049 • **Who's responsible for carrying the message of NA?**
- 1050 • **What other organizations do we come in contact with?**
- 1051 • **Why is it so important that we be careful with outside interests?**

1052 Our Fellowship's primary purpose defines us. We are a society of addicts sharing with
1053 others the hope of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. When NA's identity becomes too
1054 closely tied to the identity of another organization, the clarity of our primary purpose is
1055 muddied, losing some of its power.

1056 The Sixth Tradition warns us of three things that could blur the distinction between
1057 Narcotics Anonymous and other enterprises: endorsement, financing, and the lending of our
1058 name. An endorsement is a public statement of support for another organization. Financing
1059 another organization further endorses its purpose. Lending our name to a related facility or
1060 outside enterprise—allowing an addiction treatment facility, for example, to call itself The
1061 NA Medical Center—is the ultimate endorsement, permanently tying our primary purpose to
1062 theirs in the public eye.

- 1063 • **How is our primary purpose defined?**

1064 • **What can we do to insure that our primary purpose is kept?**

1065 • **What is an endorsement?**

1066 • **How could accepting money from outside enterprises cause us problems?**

1067 • **Why shouldn't we lend our name?**

1068 By establishing boundaries, the Sixth Tradition helps our groups avoid some of the
1069 problems that commonly arise between organizations. If we endorse an organization that later
1070 runs into trouble, our reputation will be damaged along with theirs. If we support an outside
1071 enterprise that some find obnoxious, addicts seeking recovery may be discouraged from
1072 coming to our meetings. If we voice support for another organization, the public, the addict
1073 who still suffers, even our own members might confuse that organization's purpose with ours.
1074 If we fund a related facility or outside enterprise, money that could be used to fulfill our
1075 primary purpose is diverted; if we later withdraw that funding, other problems occur. If we
1076 finance or lend our name to one organization instead of another, we can be drawn into a
1077 conflict between the two. By helping our groups avoid such problems, Tradition Six allows us
1078 to devote all our energy to carrying a clear NA message to addicts seeking recovery.

1079 • **What is the importance of the group setting and maintaining healthy boundaries?**

1080 • **How can we fall into the trap of endorsing, financing or lending our name to outside**
1081 **enterprises?**

1082 • **How is our primary purpose diverted when we do so?**

1083 We must exist in the world. It is not possible to be entirely separate, evading all
1084 contact with outside agencies. Not only is it impossible, it's not a good idea. Cooperation with
1085 others is healthy for Narcotics Anonymous. Contacts between our groups and the public help
1086 others understand NA better. They help increase public goodwill toward NA. They lead

1087 doctors, teachers, friends, and relatives to recommend NA to addicts who want recovery.
1088 They help us carry the message to addicts who cannot get to regular meetings. Letting others
1089 know who we are and what we offer increases the chance that addicts seeking recovery will
1090 hear our message.

- 1091 • **What is the importance of keeping outside contact with the public?**
- 1092 • **Why is public information work a must?**
- 1093 • **What part can these contacts play in helping to spread our message?**

1094 NA groups often cultivate good relations with nearby treatment facilities and make
1095 them feel welcome when they visit. There is a difference, though, between cooperation and
1096 endorsement. When a group's primary purpose becomes blurred by its relationship with some
1097 other facility or organization, it is time for the group to step back and examine that
1098 relationship. For instance, when a group or an area holds a dance, should it offer a reduced
1099 entry price to patients from such facilities? Why not just extend such reductions to all
1100 newcomers? We should ask these kinds of questions whenever our group's relationship with a
1101 related facility or outside enterprise become so close that our group appears to be linked with
1102 the other organization. By asking ourselves these questions, we help ensure that our
1103 cooperation with an outside agency does not inadvertently become an endorsement of that
1104 agency.

- 1105 • **What is the difference between cooperation and endorsement?**
- 1106 • **Why shouldn't we offer reduced rates only to addicts from specific outside agencies?**
- 1107 • **Why shouldn't we ever align ourselves with outside enterprises?**
- 1108 • **Though it is important for us to cooperate with others outside the Fellowship, how**
1109 **are we hurt by our endorsements?**

1110 There are many related facilities and outside enterprises devoted to understanding
1111 addiction and aiding recovery. Like NA, each has its particular primary purpose that is
1112 reflected in its literature and its message. While that purpose may be similar to ours, it will not
1113 be the same as ours because the organization is separate from us. We use NA literature and
1114 speakers in our meetings to help us fulfill NA's purpose. An NA group that uses another
1115 organization's literature or speakers endorses that organization's primary purpose, not ours.

- 1116 • **Why is it so important that we not confuse our primary purpose?**
- 1117 • **Why is using only NA literature and speakers important to fulfilling our primary**
1118 **purpose?**
- 1119 • **Why should we separate ourselves from outside facilities and enterprises?**

1120 Although a few NA groups meet in their own buildings, most do not. Those who rent
1121 meeting space from other organizations need to take special care never to endorse, finance, or
1122 lend the NA name to the organizations from which they rent their meeting space. For instance,
1123 is the group paying substantially more to meet in a particular facility than it would somewhere
1124 else? Does this make it appear that the group endorses the facility, or is the group funding an
1125 outside enterprise with its "rent" payment? When we devote our energies and funds to
1126 carrying the NA message, we free ourselves from distractions or confusion with the primary
1127 purpose of other organizations.

1128 It is important to remember that we as NA members and groups are responsible for
1129 observing our Twelve Traditions. The facilities in which we meet do not have this
1130 responsibility; neither do other organizations. If it appears that some outside organization or
1131 facility is compromising our traditions, we are responsible to discuss their actions with them.

1132 While we cannot demand that they change their behavior, a reasonable approach and open
1133 discussion will often lead to mutually satisfactory solutions.

- 1134 • **What are our motives for where we hold our meetings?**
- 1135 • **Who is the responsible for following our Traditions?**
- 1136 • **How should we handle our disagreements with outside facilities or organizations?**

1137 A group's meetings provide a forum in which individual members can share their
1138 recovery with one another. The message we carry in our meetings can either enhance our
1139 efforts to fulfill our primary purpose or distract us from it. Each of us can play a part in
1140 carrying out Tradition Six by asking ourselves, "What do I do to clarify NA's relations with
1141 other organizations?"

1142 Many of us use a variety of resources in our personal programs of recovery and
1143 spiritual growth. Not all of them, however, relate directly to NA's primary purpose. Do we
1144 imply an endorsement of a related facility or outside enterprise when we share in a NA
1145 meeting about the good things we've found elsewhere? Do we distract other members at the
1146 meeting from NA's message of recovery or give new members the wrong impression about
1147 the Narcotics Anonymous program? No one can answer these questions for us. But by
1148 answering these questions for ourselves, we can each help free our group of problems that
1149 could divert us from our primary purpose.

- 1150 • **Why is it so important that we keep the forum at our meetings in line with our**
1151 **primary purpose?**
- 1152 • **Name some ways we could become distracted from our primary purpose in our**
1153 **meetings?**

- 1154 • **What can I do as an individual member to ensure that I stay within the guidelines of**
1155 **Tradition Six?**

1156 ***Applying spiritual principles***

1157 The application of principles is the basis of our freedom. When we adhere to the
1158 principles of recovery, we are free to carry the message and interact with others, knowing that
1159 we will not compromise our purpose. Some of the principles that help us observe Tradition
1160 Six include humility, integrity, faith, harmony, and anonymity.

1161 Humility reminds us of NA's role in society. We have a program that has provided
1162 much help to many addicts seeking recovery. We do not, however, have any other purpose in
1163 society than to carry the NA message, nor do we pretend that Narcotics Anonymous offers
1164 anything more than freedom from active addiction. It may be tempting to think of other good
1165 things we might do in the world or for each other if we extended our focus or closely allied
1166 ourselves with a wide range of related facilities or outside enterprises. These grandiose
1167 dreams serve only to divert us from our primary purpose. Carrying our message to the still-
1168 suffering addict is sufficient for us.

- 1169 • **How do humility, integrity, faith, harmony, and anonymity apply to the Sixth**
1170 **Tradition?**

- 1171 • **As groups, how do we practice all of these principles?**

1172 Carrying a clear message of recovery in NA reflects integrity. Our message is outlined
1173 in our Twelve Traditions and further articulated in NA literature. Because our message is also
1174 our identity, we take care not to confuse it with our beliefs or literature of other organizations.

- 1175 • **How do we measure our integrity as a group?**
1176 • **How can I as a member measure my integrity?**

- 1177 • **What is reflected through our message?**
1178 • **Why is it important that we not confuse our literature with that of other**
1179 **organizations?**

1180 We demonstrate faith when we don't trade our endorsements, funds, or name for the
1181 cooperation of others. It's true that our friends in society can help us carry our message to
1182 addicts who need us. But our faith lies in the effectiveness of our message and the Higher
1183 Power that guides our recovery, not in the related facilities and outside enterprises we deal
1184 with. If a relationship with another organization compromises our devotion to carrying the
1185 recovery message, we need not be afraid to let go of that relationship. Our strength is in the
1186 power of the NA program. After all, it works!

- 1187 • **How is faith defined in the Sixth Tradition?**
1188 • **How can we practice faith in this Tradition?**

1189 The principle of harmony is both assumed and supported by Tradition Six. Our groups
1190 seek to cooperate with others in society whenever possible and as much as possible. Our
1191 contacts with others are made simple and straightforward when we let them know, right from
1192 the start, how far we can go in cooperating with them. By respecting the Sixth Tradition's
1193 boundaries in our group's relations with other organizations, we generate harmony in those
1194 relations.

- 1195 • **What can we do to ensure harmony with outside organizations?**
1196 • **Who is responsible for creating that harmony?**
1197 • **What can we do as groups to improve our relations with outside entities?**

1198 Our identity as a Fellowship is founded in anonymity and selfless service, carrying the
1199 message one addict to another. The relationships we have with outside organizations are

1200 based on the personalities of our leaders; our groups themselves are responsible for their
1201 cooperation with other organizations, making those contacts stronger and more effective.

1202 Additionally, anonymity helps us avoid blurring our purpose in our contacts with other
1203 organizations. Our relationships with outside agencies exist to help us fulfill our primary
1204 purpose, not merely to build our reputation or prestige. When we observe the spirit of
1205 anonymity, we seek nothing other than to carry the recovery message to the addict who still
1206 suffers.

- 1207 • **How is anonymity defined in the context of the Sixth Tradition?**
- 1208 • **What qualities should we look for in individuals whom we chose to interact outside**
1209 **agencies on behalf of NA?**

1210 Within the limits established by Tradition Six, we have a tremendous freedom to carry
1211 the message of recovery and help other addicts. We have clear boundaries set by our identity
1212 as Narcotics Anonymous. When we take care to observe those boundaries, our outside
1213 relationships enhance our ability to carry the message to the addict who still suffers rather
1214 than diverting us from our primary purpose.

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“Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

-TRADITION SEVEN

1234 The Seventh Tradition adds further clarity to our group's dealings with the public.
1235 Tradition Six cautioned us against funding other organizations, lest problems of money,
1236 property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose. Tradition Seven encourages us to
1237 decline funding from other organizations for the same reason: to maintain our group's focus
1238 on its primary purpose. By paying our own expenses, we remain free to carry our own
1239 message.

1240 We encourage every NA group to be fully self-supporting. We also recognize that
1241 many meetings don't start that way. Some meetings are started by one or two NA members
1242 who want to help carry the message to other addicts. Frequently, such members pay rent and
1243 buy literature for these meetings out of their pockets. Sometimes they're given help by
1244 established NA groups or by the nearest Area Committee. Either way, it may take some time
1245 before a new meeting is able to stand on its own feet.

- 1246 • **Where should help come from when starting a new meeting?**
- 1247 • **What is the importance of declining outside funding to the NA group?**

1248 Other meetings – for instance, many in institutions – are started by nonmember
1249 professionals who've become acquainted with the Narcotics Anonymous program. Wanting to
1250 provide their clients with access to what NA has to offer, these professionals set a time, find a
1251 room, buy some literature, give a group booklet to the addicts who've gathered, and help them
1252 start a meeting. After some exposure to the principles underlying the NA program, these
1253 recovering addicts begin taking responsibility for their meetings themselves.

1254 How a meeting is begun is not nearly so important as how it grows. Our experience is
1255 that, once a meeting is established, it gathers momentum. The meeting begins attracting a
1256 group of addicts who attend on a fairly consistent basis. These addicts share their experiences

1257 with one another and help each other better understand NA's principles of recovery. At this
1258 point, the meeting has become more than just an event; an NA group evolved from the
1259 meeting, complete with members committed to supporting one another. The group as a whole
1260 is ready to take full responsibility for its obligations.

- 1261 • **Why doesn't it matter how a group is started? Or who starts the group even?**
- 1262 • **When do the members begin to take some responsibility for the group**
1263 **themselves? And what does these responsibilities include?**

1264 Many of us think of the Seventh Tradition as the money tradition. While we have
1265 come to associate this tradition of self-support with the funds we contribute, the spirit of the
1266 Seventh Tradition goes much farther than that. Whatever a group needs to fulfill its primary
1267 purpose should be provided by the group itself.

1268 The question then is, what does a group need? First and foremost, it needs a message
1269 to carry-and that, it already has.. In the course of its evolution, the group has attracted
1270 members who've proven to one another that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose
1271 the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Without that message, the group has no reason to
1272 exist; with it, an NA group needs little more. Beyond that, the needs of the group are simple.
1273 Groups need to rent meeting places where their members can gather and where newcomers
1274 can find them. Most groups find it important to buy NA literature, which they make available
1275 at their meetings. The expenses associated with these things may be substantial, yet most
1276 groups can meet such expenses by passing the hat.

- 1277 • **As members, how do we support our Seventh Tradition?**
- 1278 • **Why isn't our support limited to just the dollars we put in the basket? Explain...**
- 1279 • **Who is responsible for supporting Narcotics Anonymous? Explain...**

1280 After paying their basic expenses, most groups contribute to the NA Service Boards
1281 and Committees that serve them. Phonelines, Meeting lists, NA literature, H&I panels, and
1282 Public Information presentations all benefit the group. That's why service contributions are
1283 just as surely a part of a group's self-support obligation as the rent for it's meeting room. Like
1284 the groups, NA Service Boards and Committees decline contributions from sources outside
1285 the Fellowship. Unlike the groups, however, our service boards and committees are not
1286 themselves fully self-supporting. They have been created to help the groups fulfill their
1287 primary purpose more effectively, and they depend on group contributions for the money they
1288 need to do their work.

- 1289 • **Who's responsibility is it to support our service boards and committees? Why?**
- 1290 • **Who holds the responsibility for making sure that we fulfill our primary purpose?**
- 1291 • **Why do the NA Service Boards and Committees decline outside contributions?**
- 1292 • **Why is it important is it that we pass along our excess monies up through our service**
1293 **structure?**

1294 To fulfill its purpose, the group also needs some things that don't cost a penny. A
1295 group needs someone to open its meeting room, set up the chairs, and prepare the literature
1296 table. In some groups, a member offers to prepare refreshments, helping establish a hospitable
1297 environment for the newcomer. Most importantly, a group needs the consistent commitment
1298 of its members to show up and take part in its meetings. Upon that commitment rests the
1299 group's stability; without it, no group can survive long. Just as our group's survival depends
1300 on its members, so does the survival of our service boards and committees. It's through our
1301 members support that our recovery message is carried.

1302 • **What can I do to support our Seventh Tradition in my group, service board or**
1303 **committees?**

1304 • **What does self-support mean to me?**

1305 • **Why is it important for members to consistently show up at meetings?**

1306 As simple as a group's needs are, a group's decision to become fully self supporting
1307 does not usually require the commitment of extensive amounts of its member's money, time,
1308 or other resources. If a group is having problems sustaining itself, it may want to ask itself
1309 some questions during a group inventory:

1310 • **What is our primary purpose, and how do we fulfill it?**


1311 • **Are our service committees doing everything that they can to fulfill our primary**
1312 **purpose?**

1313 • **What does our group need to fulfill its primary purpose?**

1314 • **How have we confused our wants with our needs?**

1315 When a group's sense of its needs have become unreasonable, the simplicity of the
1316 Fifth Tradition can help deflate those needs to their proper size.

1317 • **What can a group do if it is still unable to pay its own way even after examining its**
1318 **understanding of the Fifth Tradition?**

1319 • **Tradition Seven tells our groups that they should not seek outside contributions, but**
1320 **what considerations keep us from seeking money outside the NA Fellowship?** 

1321 First, the group will want to consider its identity as a part of the Fellowship of
1322 Narcotics Anonymous. Recovery in NA is very different in a number of ways from our using.
1323 When we were using, many of us took whatever we could from whomever we could as often
1324 as we could. Our group's decision to become fully self-supporting, declining outside

1325 contributions, reflects the new way our members are living in recovery. Rather than taking
1326 what we want or need from others, we are paying our own way.

1327 The group will also want to examine its identity as a group. When we were using,
1328 most of us looked out for ourselves and ourselves alone, not giving any thought for one
1329 another's welfare. An NA recovery group, on the other hand, is founded on its members'
1330 commitment to one another. Many of us have tried to find a way of making it on our own, but
1331 without success. We've found we need one another to survive and to grow. The NA group is
1332 both the expression and fulfillment of that need we have for one another's support. An NA
1333 group reinforces the solidarity of its members and the foundation of their continued recovery
1334 by declining outside contributions.

- 1335 • **Why is it so important that a group remain committed to being fully self-supporting?**
- 1336 • **How does a group draw strength from its members?**
- 1337 • **How is our foundation reinforced through our self-supporting efforts?**
- 1338 • **What would happen to a group if its' members acted in the same selfish ways they**
1339 **did in active addiction?**

1340 “Alright,” we say, “our group has made a commitment to become self-supporting. But
1341 what if the money we collect from passing the hat still isn't sufficient to meet our needs?
1342 What if we sold some T-shirts or jewelry to raise some cash or held a dinner and asked for a
1343 donation at the door? Perhaps the energy our members put into such activities could be turned
1344 into money we need to pay our bills.”

1345 On the face of it, there doesn't seem to be any contradiction between the Seventh
1346 Tradition and these kinds of money-raising activities. Before engaging in such activities,
1347 however, the group might want to ask itself why it wants these funds?

1348 We might also ask ourselves whether such activities, intended to raise money to help
1349 our group carry the message, might end up diverting us from carrying the message. Money-
1350 raising activities usually take a good bit of time to manage, time that might be better spent in
1351 fulfilling our primary purpose more directly. If fundraising activities are successful, bringing
1352 in more money than the group needs to meet its obligations, controversy over control of that
1353 money may well arise, distracting the group from its primary purpose. A group may also want
1354 to consider whether the atmosphere created by selling goods and services at its meetings
1355 might detract from the free, open atmosphere so conducive to recovery.

- 1356 • **What should a group do to meet its obligations?**
- 1357 • **If passing the hat doesn't work, what alternatives does a group have?**
- 1358 • **What problems could arise should a group sell goods or services at its meetings?**
- 1359 • **How do you know when these money-making activities are distracting the group**
1360 **from its primary purpose?**

1361 By and large, our groups have found that the simplest, straightest path to full self-
1362 support is through the voluntary contributions of their own members. For this reason, we
1363 discourage groups from engaging in fundraising activities. If a group is unable to provide for
1364 its own needs from the contributions of its members, perhaps group members will want to
1365 consider increasing their contributions.

1366 In the same breath as we speak of this, however, we need also recall our fellowship's
1367 Third Tradition, which affirms that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop
1368 using. Our membership, whether we are speaking of membership in NA as a whole or group
1369 membership, does not depend on the amount of money we give; indeed, we aren't required to
1370 give any amount at all in order to consider ourselves NA members.

- 1371 • **What is the importance of our own contributions?**
- 1372 • **What part does anonymity play in the Seventh Tradition?**
- 1373 • **How can depending on funds other than our own contributions divert us from our**
- 1374 **primary purpose?**

1375 If our group has carefully examined its expenses, trimmed them to match only what it

1376 needs to fulfill its primary purpose, and still doesn't bring in enough money to pay its own

1377 way, the group's members will be left with some questions only they can answer for

1378 themselves, individually:

- 1379 • **What do I get from the group?**
- 1380 • **Does my personal recovery depend on its survival?**
- 1381 • **Am I able to give more than I've already given and still meet my own financial**
- 1382 **responsibilities?**

1383 At the same time as we consider our levels of personal contributions to the group, we

1384 should remember that Tradition Seven speaks of the group as being self-supporting, not of

1385 one or two well-off group members paying all the group's expenses or doing all its work. We

1386 each do well in giving our part toward the group's self-support obligations without making

1387 the group overly dependent on our individual contributions.

- 1388 • **What could happen if we allow members to contribute more than their share?**
- 1389 • **Who has the responsibility of our groups' support?**
- 1390 • **Am I doing my part as a group member? Explain...**

1391 In the end, our individual decisions and group commitments are entirely up to us

1392 because we are the ones who have to live with them. However, certain lines from our White

1393 Booklet, written in reference to the Twelve Steps, seem to apply equally to the observance of

1394 the Seventh Tradition—indeed, to all the traditions: “If you want what we have to offer, and
1395 are willing to make the effort to get it... these are the principles that made our recovery
1396 possible.” If we want what the group has to offer us individually, and if our group wants to
1397 reap the benefits associated with self-support, we will practice the principles that make those
1398 things possible.

1399 **Applying spiritual principles**

1400 Our Twelve Traditions describe those specific things that have been found to help our
1401 groups remain strong, lively, and free. Underlying the specifics of our traditions, however, are
1402 dozens of spirituals principles, any one of which could be applied to almost any the Twelve
1403 Traditions. This broad field of principles is the ground upon which the traditions have grown.
1404 The more we cultivate this ground, the stronger our understanding and application of each of
1405 the traditions themselves will be. Some of the principles that will strengthen our
1406 understanding and application of the Seventh Tradition are **gratitude, responsibility, faith,**
1407 **integrity, anonymity, and freedom.**

- 1408 • **How does the group gain strength by being fully self-supporting?**
- 1409 • **What spiritual principles are involved and how do they apply? Explain...**

1410 The gratitude we speak of in regard to Tradition Seven is like the collective sense of
1411 direction the Second Tradition talks about; it is the gratitude of the NA group. When NA
1412 members gather to share their recovery, they generate a sense of gratitude among themselves.
1413 They are grateful the group exists and want it to continue to be there for them and for the
1414 members yet to come. The gratitude of the group speaks, in part, through the group’s
1415 collective commitment to support itself.

- 1416 • **What is my understanding of gratitude in the Seventh Tradition?**

1417 • **How do I show my gratitude for the group?**

1418 The group's decision to become fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions,
1419 reflects the group's sense of responsibility for itself. In recovery, we discard the illusion that
1420 the rest of the world is responsible to take care of us; rather, we take due pride in caring for
1421 ourselves. Individually, we demonstrate our newfound maturity by accepting the weight of
1422 our own burdens; collectively, we demonstrate our maturity by accepting responsibility for
1423 our group, neither seeking nor accepting outside contributions.

1424 The burden of responsibility, however, may seem unbearable without an appreciation
1425 for the simplicity of the group's needs. The commitment to become self-supporting is not a
1426 commitment to raise vast sums of money to fulfill sweeping programs. Rather, the group
1427 determines it will muster the few basic resources it needs to fulfill its simple primary purpose:
1428 to carry the message to the still-suffering addict. The ideal of simplicity, when applied to
1429 Tradition Seven, helps our groups avoid the heated conflicts that often arise over the control
1430 of great resources. Problems of money, property, and prestige need not divert our groups from
1431 their primary purpose when simplicity of that purpose and of our needs is kept squarely in
1432 focus.

1433 • **How do I accept responsibility in Tradition Seven?**

1434 • **How important is simplicity to this tradition?**

1435 • **As a group, how do we except and achieve our responsibilities?**

1436 Simplicity walks hand and hand with our faith in a Higher Power. So long as we take
1437 our direction from that Power, our needs are met. The decision to decline outside
1438 contributions by meeting the group's needs from the group's own resources is based firmly in
1439 faith. So long as our group remains devoted to fulfilling its primary purpose, its needs are met.

1440 • **How do we demonstrated faith in our Higher Power by practicing the Seventh**
1441 **Tradition?**

1442 • **Why is it important that we keep it simple?**

1443 As members of an NA group, we have made a commitment to support one another in
1444 our recovery. Our group's commitment to become fully self-supporting reflects the group's
1445 integrity and faithfulness to its fundamental identity. We support each other in recovery and,
1446 together, we fulfill our collective responsibilities as members of a self-supporting group.

1447 • **How is integrity applied to the Seventh Tradition?**

1448 • **How important is commitment to this tradition?**

1449 The anonymity we exercise in accepting our group responsibilities reflects our integrity.
1450 The anonymity of the Seventh Tradition means more than just contributing anonymously,
1451 without thought of recognition, though of course it does involve that. Anonymity in the
1452 context of Tradition Seven also means that all the contributions of a group's members are
1453 important. Money put in the basket, time put into setting up the meeting room, energy put into
1454 making newcomers welcome-all are part of the responsibility of the group, and all are equally
1455 important contributions to the self-supporting NA program.

1456 • **What does anonymity mean to me in the context of the Seventh Tradition?**

1457 • **How can I practice anonymity in Tradition Seven?**

1458 Our anonymity, our integrity, our faith, our sense of simplicity, our acceptance of
1459 responsibility, our gratitude-together, all these things spell freedom. By encouraging our
1460 group to pay its own way, the Seventh Tradition gives our group freedom to share its recovery
1461 as it sees fit, not obligated to outside contributors. Further, it gives our group the freedom that
1462 comes from inner strength, the strength that develops through applying spiritual principles. By

1463 making the decision to become fully self-supporting, our NA group assures that it will always
1464 have the resources it needs to survive and continue fulfilling its primary purpose.

1465 • **Define freedom as it is related to being fully self-supporting?**

1466 • **How does my freedom come from being self-supporting?**

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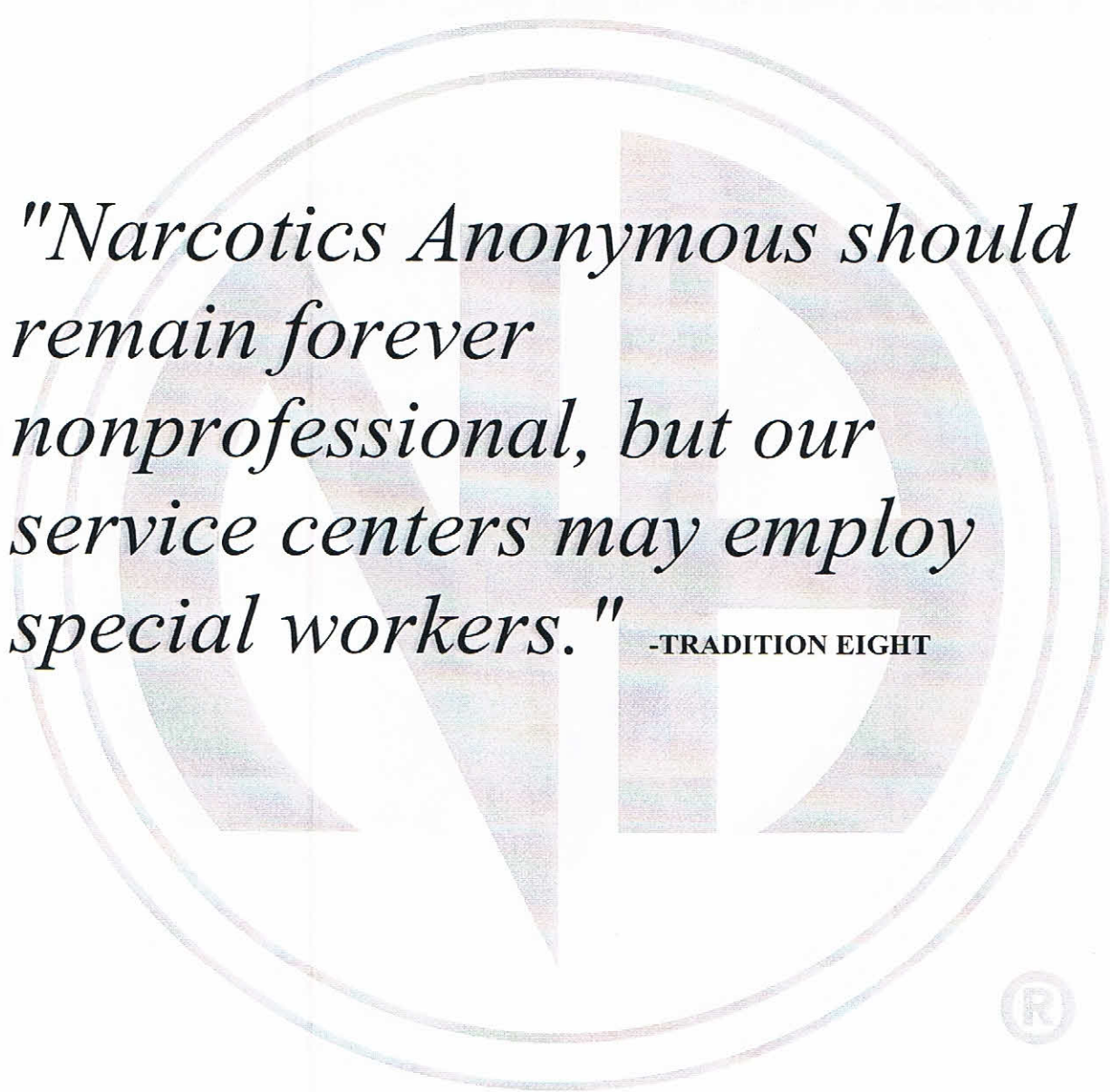
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*"Narcotics Anonymous should
remain forever
nonprofessional, but our
service centers may employ
special workers."* -TRADITION EIGHT

1498 Narcotics Anonymous offers a distinctly non-professional approach to the disease of
1499 addiction. We have no hospitals, no treatment centers, no outpatient clinics, none of the
1500 facilities associated with a professional enterprise. We do not diagnose anyone's condition or
1501 track the progress of our patients—in fact, we have no patients, only members. Our groups do
1502 not provide professional therapeutic, medical, legal, or psychiatric services. We are simply a
1503 Fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

- 1504 • **Define professionals.**
- 1505 • **What is the difference between a non-professional approach and a professional**
1506 **approach?**
- 1507 • **Define special workers.**
- 1508 • **What is the difference between professionals and special workers?**

1509 In discussing the Sixth Tradition, we considered the sufficiency of our message.
1510 Narcotics Anonymous groups need not rely on outside enterprises in order to effectively offer
1511 recovery from addiction. In the same way, Tradition Eight reminds us that our members need
1512 no professional credentials to be effective in carrying the NA message. The heart of the NA
1513 way of recovery from addiction is one addict helping another. We have no certified NA
1514 counselors; our varied experience in recovery from drug addiction is all the credentials we
1515 need. The firsthand exposure each of us has in recovery from addiction is more than sufficient
1516 to qualify us to carry the message to other addicts.

1517 This is not to say that a member of Narcotics Anonymous should never take a job as a
1518 professional therapist of one sort or another. It is only to say that, at an NA meeting, a
1519 member's vocation is irrelevant. The therapeutic value in the message we share with one

1520 another lies in our personal experience in recovery, not in our credentials, our training, or our
1521 professional status.

- 1522 • **What is the heart of the NA way?**
- 1523 • **What is the message we share as members?**
- 1524 • **Should our professional status have any bearing on our ability to carry the message**
1525 **of recovery?**
- 1526 • **As a professional and a NA member, how do I not treat a member as a client?**
- 1527 • **Define therapeutic value in Narcotics Anonymous.**

1528 We don't sell recovery; we share it freely with others in a spirit of love and gratitude.
1529 However, Narcotics Anonymous groups, service boards and committees may require
1530 professional help in fulfilling their responsibilities. Tradition Eight makes a distinction
1531 between "selling our recovery" and paying people to help us do our service work. If one of
1532 our committees requires professional assistance in a service task, it's alright, for example, to
1533 contract the help of a lawyer or an accountant. If we need to employ someone to help us on a
1534 regular basis, a "special worker" we may give them a paycheck in return for the services they
1535 provide us. Special workers who are also NA members are not selling their recovery. They are
1536 simply providing professional service support we would otherwise have to hire non-addicts to
1537 provide.

- 1538 • **What are some examples of a special worker?**
- 1539 • **When is it proper for us to hire professionals to help us? List possible examples.**
- 1540 • **Who determines when it is necessary to hire outside workers? List possible**
1541 **examples.**

1542 **Applying spiritual principles**

1543 Tradition Eight is one of the simplest and most straightforward of the Twelve
1544 Traditions. Likewise, the principles underlying the Eighth Tradition are eminently practical
1545 ones: humility, prudence, anonymity, and integrity.

1546 An NA group exercises humility when it does not pretend to be anything more or less
1547 than it is. We do not claim to be professionals or experts in anything. We are not physicians,
1548 or therapists; we are recovering addicts. All we offer is our collective practical experience in
1549 getting clean and learning to live clean. The value of our program comes from the
1550 identification and trust that exist between one addict and another.

- 1551 • **Define humility.**
- 1552 • **How are we practicing humility in the context of Tradition Eight?**
- 1553 • **What do we have to offer another addict seeking recovery?**
- 1554 • **Where does the value of our program come from?**

1555 We further exercise humility when we recognize that sometimes we need
1556 professionals to help us fulfill our services. We place great emphasis on the therapeutic value
1557 of one addict helping another, sometimes to the extent that we are reluctant to hire
1558 professional assistance when we need it. But some NA services require too much time or
1559 expertise for our members to fulfill on a strictly volunteer basis. We mustn't allow our pride to
1560 prevent our Fellowship from hiring the help it needs to support its services.

- 1561 • **In what other way can we practice humility?**
- 1562 • **Should pride ever be a factor in our decision making process?**
- 1563 • **How does an addict determine when their volunteer status is interfering with their**
1564 **recovery?**
- 1565 • **What are some reasons for seeking professional assistance?**

1566 Neither should we hire special workers for jobs we can do for ourselves. We must
1567 exercise prudence in employing professional assistance for our services. Most NA service
1568 responsibilities do not require special expertise or large consistent commitments of time. Our
1569 members are perfectly capable of fulfilling such responsibilities on a volunteer basis. By
1570 exercising prudence, we can distinguish between those we can fulfill voluntarily.

- 1571 • **Define prudence as it applies to the Eighth Tradition?**
- 1572 • **How do we exercise prudence in fulfilling our responsibilities?**
- 1573 • **Who holds the responsibility for the welfare of NA as a whole?**
- 1574 • **In what ways can we help fulfil service responsibilities?**

1575 Tradition Eight reminds our groups of the value of anonymity. Professionals are
1576 people with certain specialized skills, often recognized by the credentials given them by a
1577 certifying panel. An NA group has no such recognized experts. All group members are
1578 experts in their own recovery, fully qualified to share that recovery with another addict.

- 1579 • **As members of NA, what qualifies us to share our experience, strength, and hope?**
- 1580 • **Define anonymity as it relates to Tradition Eight.**

1581 Finally, Tradition Eight supports the integrity of the NA group by helping it preserve
1582 what is most important about its fundamental identity. What is Narcotics Anonymous, after
1583 all, but a Fellowship of addicts freely sharing with one another the simple message of their
1584 own experience? Tradition Eight is a firm and permanent commitment on the part of each NA
1585 group to steadfastly maintain the feature of our program that is, indeed, of foremost value. By
1586 agreeing that Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, we reaffirm our
1587 belief that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel! This is the

1588 heart of our program; so long as that heart beats strongly, our Fellowship and our recovery
1589 shall remain vital.

- 1590 • **Define integrity as it relates to the Eighth Tradition.**
- 1591 • **Why is practicing integrity so important to this Tradition?**
- 1592 • **Who holds the responsibility of the integrity of the Eighth Tradition?**
- 1593 • **What is the therapeutic value of one addict helping another addict?**

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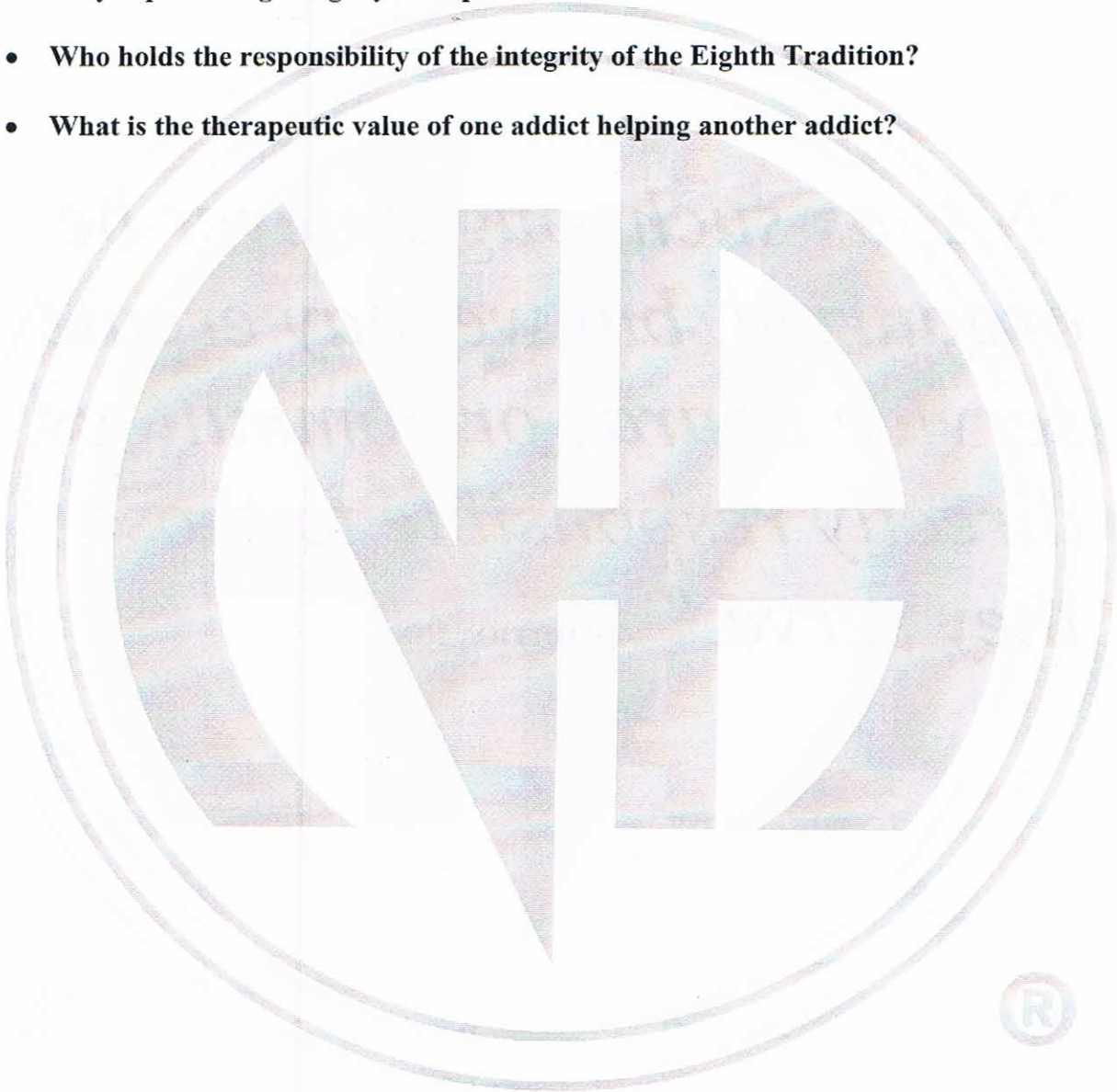
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"NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." -TRADITION NINE

1623 In our White Booklet, we read that "NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men
1624 and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who
1625 meet regularly to help each other stay clean." This is NA, as such-a simple fellowship using a
1626 nonprofessional, addict-to addict approach to the disease of addiction. We are a fellowship,
1627 not a lobbying organization or a medical service or a chain of treatment facilities. We are non-
1628 professional. We have no rules, no fees, no governing bodies, and only one membership
1629 requirement: a desire to stop using. Our primary purpose is, quite simply, to carry the
1630 message. These are some of the traditional standards by which our groups may guide
1631 themselves, and our ultimate guiding authority is a Higher Power as it finds expression in the
1632 conscience of our members. Our groups work as well as they do because they keep it simple,
1633 least anything get in the way of carrying our message as simply and directly as possible, one
1634 addict to another.

- 1635 • **What is our fellowships only requirement? Explain.**
- 1636 • **Who is in control of Narcotics Anonymous?**

1637 Yet for all its emphasis on keeping things simple, Tradition Nine is not an excuse for
1638 dis-organized service work; instead, it recognizes that our fellowship does require a certain
1639 degree of organization to fulfill its primary purpose. Rather than recommend that NA groups
1640 themselves become organized, the Ninth Tradition suggests that groups organize separate
1641 boards and committees to serve their needs. Just as we are nonprofessional but may hire
1642 professionals to help us, so we are not organized but may organize boards and committees to
1643 serve us. This arrangement ensures that NA, as such, maintains its uncluttered, direct
1644 approach to recovery while assuring our ability to fulfill service tasks requiring a certain
1645 amount of organization.

- 1646 • **What are service boards and committees?**
- 1647 • **What is the importance of forming service boards and committees to serve the**
- 1648 **group?**
- 1649 • **When is it okay for us to be organized?**
- 1650 • **Should our organization ever interfere with our primary purpose and why?**

1651 Okay, so we may create service boards or committees. Now we must ask ourselves,
1652 why would we want to create such things? What are the needs these boards and committees
1653 would fulfill? To answer this question, let's look at how an NA group evolves, as we did when
1654 considering the Seventh Tradition.

1655 In the beginning, an area's first NA group only needs to gather its members together so
1656 they can help one another stay clean and carry their message to other addicts. As the group
1657 grows, it begins taking care of a variety of business related to its meetings, trying to ensure
1658 that the message is carried as effectively as possible. To maintain the focus of its recovery
1659 meetings, the group usually conducts its business meeting separately, keeping NA, as such, as
1660 simple as possible.

1661 As the group grows even larger, it often sprouts new groups. To maintain some of the
1662 unity and camaraderie that existed when there was only one group in the area, these groups
1663 elect representatives who meet periodically. These representatives share information with one
1664 another about how their individual groups are doing and help one another find solutions to
1665 problems one group or another may be having. From time to time, they may even organize a
1666 joint recovery meeting or social activity, gathering the entire NA community together.

- 1667 • **What is a GSR?**
- 1668 • **How does the GSR serve its group?**

1669 • **How is an area service committee formed? Explain.**

1670 • **What is an area subcommittee? Give Examples.**

1671 • **What are the needs these service boards and committees fulfill?**

1672 Sooner or later, the groups realize the potential they have in this committee of
1673 representatives. Through this committee, the groups can combine their guidance and resources
1674 so that each of them can function more effectively and all, together, can carry the message
1675 farther. The groups may ask their committee to buy bulk supplies of literature, making it
1676 easier for each group to procure NA books and pamphlets. The groups might ask their
1677 committee to compile a directory for distribution at meetings throughout the area, making it
1678 easier for addicts to find out where NA meetings are being held. The groups may ask that
1679 public information, hospitals and institutions, and Phone line programs are set up, letting still-
1680 suffering addicts who might not hear of NA by word of mouth know of the fellowship's
1681 existence and increasing general awareness of Narcotics Anonymous. The point is, the
1682 development of these services is based squarely on the groups' needs. We create these boards
1683 and committees to serve us in fulfilling those needs.

1684 • **Do the committees and service boards serve the groups or do the groups serve them?**

1685 **Give examples.**

1686 • **What part does unity play in the area committee? Give examples.**

1687 • **Where should the support for our service boards and committees come from and**
1688 **why should it be given?**

1689 As our groups grow, so does our needs from our area grow. Explain.

1690 First, the groups define their needs; then, they create the boards and committees which will
1691 serve them. Once created, how do we assure that our service boards and committees will

1692 remain directly responsible to those they serve? We do this, first and foremost, through
1693 consistent communication. Through their representatives, groups communicate with the
1694 boards and committees serving them. The groups provide regular information about their
1695 condition and their activities. They communicate their concerns, their needs, their ideas, and
1696 their wishes. This information helps our boards and committees better understand and serve
1697 the needs of the groups.

- 1698 • **What subcommittee is created at the area level to assure that our service boards and**
1699 **committees remain directly responsible to the groups they serve?**
- 1700 • **How do we hold our representatives accountable to the groups they serve?**
- 1701 • **Why is communication so important? Explain.**
- 1702 • **How does this apply to our primary purpose?**
- 1703 • **What kind of information should the groups communicate to these boards and**
1704 **committees? Be specific.**

1705 Communication is a two-way street. Groups share information and guidance with the
1706 boards and committees serving them. Then these boards and committees report back to the
1707 groups to which they are responsible, describing their operation, discussions, and plans.
1708 Responsible service boards and committees consult the groups in matters directly affecting
1709 them and seek direction from the groups in matters not already covered by existing policy. By
1710 maintaining regular two-way communication between NA groups and the boards and
1711 committees serving them, we create an atmosphere of responsibility that serve our fellowship
1712 and its primary purpose well.

- 1713 • **Communication is a two-way street. Explain.**

1714 • **What is the difference between responsible service boards and committees and**
1715 **irresponsible service boards and committees? Give three examples of each.**

1716 • **What are policies generated to achieve?**

1717 **Applying spiritual principles**

1718 Because the Ninth Tradition empowers the group to establish a service structure-not a
1719 simple thing-many of us think of Tradition Nine as being very complex. In reality, the
1720 spiritual principles underlying this tradition are very simple. The Ninth Tradition focuses,
1721 first, not on the relationship between groups and service committees but on NA, as such. We
1722 are a fellowship of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean, nothing more.

1723 Whenever possible, organized service work should be kept distinct from the groups so
1724 that they can remain free to simply and directly fulfill our primary purpose, addict to addict.
1725 The boards and committees we do organize, we organize on the basis of need only, using the
1726 simplest guidelines possible. We organize them solely to serve us, not to establish a complex
1727 governing bureaucracy. The Ninth Tradition is far from complicated; in fact, it speaks
1728 throughout of simplicity.

1729 • **What is the most important focus of Tradition Nine? Explain.**

1730 • **What does simplicity mean in reference to Tradition Nine? Give examples.**

1731 In the same way, Tradition Nine speaks of anonymity. When the Ninth Tradition
1732 exhorts NA, as such, never to become organized, it is telling us that we ought not create a
1733 governing hierarchy, a top-down bureaucracy dictating to our groups and members. As we
1734 noted in the Second Tradition, our leaders are not governors but servants taking their
1735 directions from the collective conscience of those they serve. Our primary purpose, not the
1736 personalities of our trusted servants, is what defines NA, as such. To reinforce the anonymity

1737 of tradition Nine, our groups, service boards, and committees practice various systems of
1738 rotating leadership so that no one personality ever dominates.

- 1739 • **What does NA, as such mean to me?**
- 1740 • **Why should NA as such, not become organized?**
- 1741 • **Why should we rotate our leaders periodically?**
- 1742 • **How do we apply anonymity in Tradition Nine? Explain.**

1743 Another principle implicit in the Ninth Tradition is the principle of humility. Each
1744 group on its own is somewhat limited in its ability to fulfill its primary purpose; it has only so
1745 many members, so much time, and so many dollars to use in carrying the message by itself.
1746 However, when a number of groups combine their resources by joining together to form a
1747 service board or committee, they enhance their ability to fulfill their primary purpose.
1748 Together, they become able to do what they could not do alone.

1749 The principle of humility also applies to the boards and committees spoken of in our
1750 Ninth Tradition. These service boards and committees are established to serve only, not to
1751 govern. They are directly responsible to the groups and are always subject to the explicit
1752 direction of the groups. Although our service boards and committees may do much more to
1753 help our groups fulfill their primary purpose, it is in the groups where NA, as such, come to
1754 focus, not in the boards and committees that they serve.

- 1755 • **What are the limitations that the group faces in fulfilling its primary purpose?**
- 1756 • **Define humility as it applies to the group as well as its boards and committees?**

1757 Prudence is one of the guiding principles behind the Ninth Tradition relationship
1758 between the groups and the boards and committees that serve them. Groups are responsible to
1759 consider their needs carefully, planning prudently before they create boards and committees.

1760 There is nothing that will complicate the simplicity of NA, as such, more than a needlessly
1761 elaborate array of committees, boards, and subcommittees.

1762 • **Define the principle of prudence.**

1763 • **How do we apply this principle to the Ninth Tradition?**

1764 The group's responsibility does not end with the establishment of a board or
1765 committee to fulfill their service needs; in fact, that is only the beginning. As long as the
1766 committee remains active, the groups should maintain familiarity with its affairs. The groups
1767 should also provide continuing guidance to the committee. Our boards and committees cannot
1768 be held accountable to the groups they serve unless the groups play a responsible role in their
1769 service relationship.

1770 • **Who has the responsibility of the committees? Explain.**

1771 • **To what extent should a group be supportive to a committee it has created? Give
1772 examples.**

1773 Finally, the Ninth Tradition speaks of fidelity. Narcotics anonymous groups join
1774 together, combining their resources to create service boards and committees that will help
1775 them better fulfill their primary purpose. Those boards and committees are not called to
1776 govern Narcotics Anonymous; they are called, rather, to faithfully execute the trust given
1777 them by the groups they serve. With a minimum of organization, our service boards and
1778 committees perform task on behalf of the groups, helping our groups remain free to do what
1779 they do best, simply and directly. Our fidelity to the Ninth Tradition assures that the simple,
1780 spontaneous atmosphere of recovery shared one addict to another in the NA group is never
1781 organized, legislated, or regulated out of existence.

1782 • **When we speak of fidelity, as it pertains to Tradition Nine what do we mean?**

1783 • **What are the three things that we never want to happen to our NA groups?**

1784 • **How do we make sure that our program remains simple and humble?**

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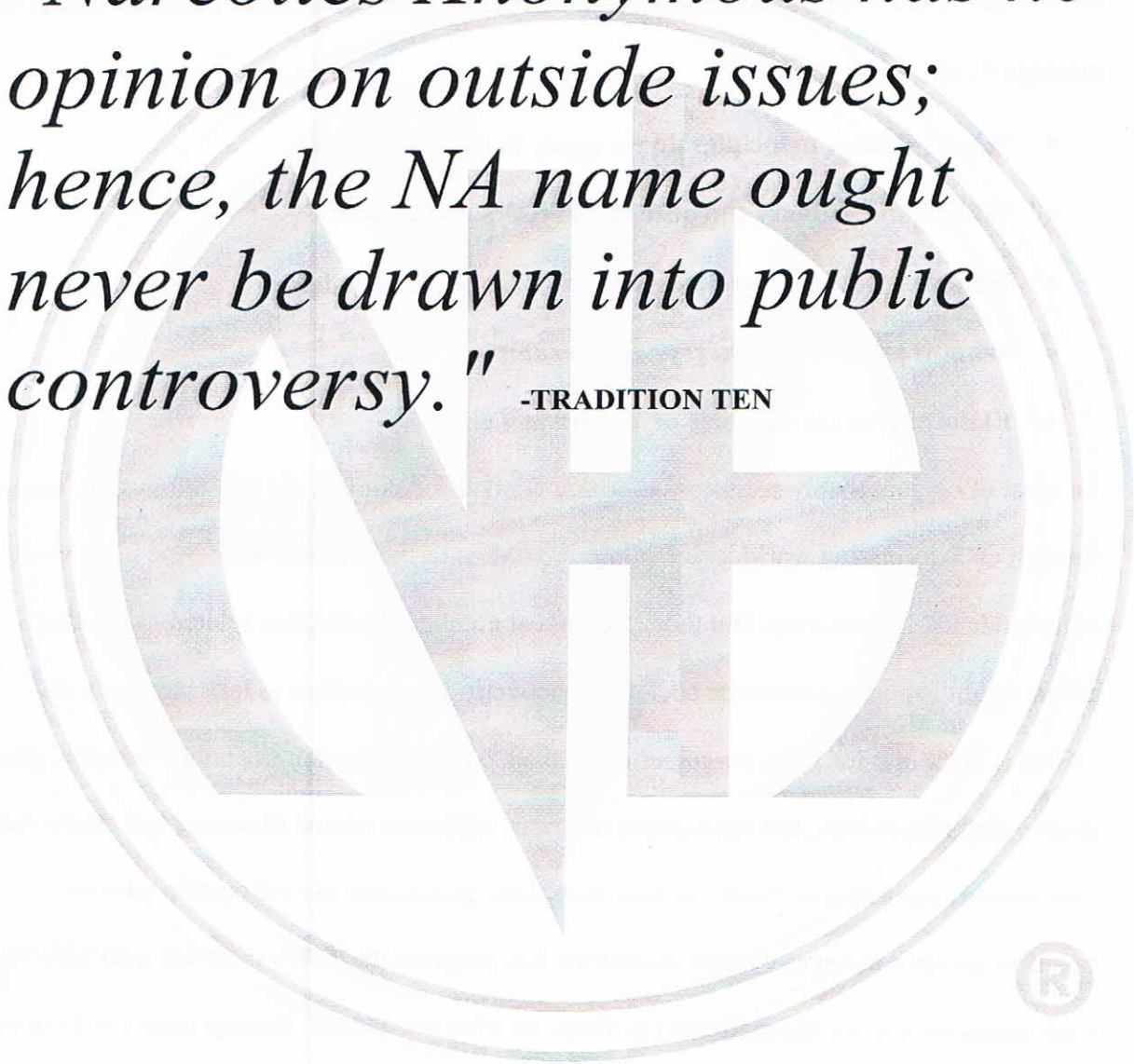
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"Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

-TRADITION TEN



1818 Narcotics Anonymous is a society of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean by
1819 applying certain simple spiritual principles. Our primary purpose, as groups and as a
1820 fellowship, is to offer that same help to any addict seeking recovery. Aside from that, NA has
1821 no opinions whatsoever. By refusing to take sides on other issues, we avoid becoming
1822 embroiled in public controversies that could distract us from our primary purpose. This is the
1823 message of our Tenth Tradition.

- 1824 • **What spiritual principles do we apply in this Tradition?**
- 1825 • **What is the primary purpose in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 1826 • **Why does NA have no opinion on outside issues? Explain.**
- 1827 • **What is public controversy? Give examples.**
- 1828 • **Elaborate on the message of Tradition Ten.**

1829 To most of us, it probably seems obvious that Narcotics Anonymous, as a fellowship, has no
1830 opinion on the pressing world issues of our day. Most of these issues have little to do with
1831 either addiction or recovery. But there are a great number of addiction related issues that
1832 others might expect a worldwide society of recovering drug addicts to take positions on.
1833 "What is NA's opinion," we are sometimes asked, "on the addiction treatment industry, other
1834 twelve step fellowships, the legalization of drugs, addiction related illnesses, and all the rest?"
1835 Our answer, according to Tradition Ten, is that our groups and our fellowship take no
1836 position, pro or con, on any issues except the NA program itself. We maintain neutrality on
1837 such issues so that we can maintain our focus on what we do best: sharing recovery from one
1838 addict to another.

- 1839 • **Why doesn't NA express an opinion on addiction related issues?**
- 1840 • **What do we have to lose by not remaining neutral?**

- 1841 • **What benefits do we gain by maintaining neutrality?**
- 1842 • **What is our position on issues outside the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 1843 • **Should we ever express our opinion on outside issues? Explain.**
- 1844 • **How do outside entities get information on Narcotics Anonymous?**

1845 However, even in explaining our own program in public, we may find ourselves treading on
1846 controversial ground. NA's views on total abstinence, on the possibility of recovering in
1847 society without long-term institutionalization, on the disease concept of addiction, even our
1848 broad views on spirituality are not met with universal acceptance. Others who deal with
1849 addiction and recovery may view these matters very differently than we do. We cannot deny
1850 those aspects of our program that others take exception to. We can, however, take care to
1851 explain our program in such a way as not to invite controversy deliberately. "We do not
1852 suggest that anyone adopt our views, nor do we oppose those with different views," we can
1853 explain. "We simply want you to know what the Narcotics Anonymous program is like." So
1854 long as we focus, as groups and as a fellowship, on our recovery experience rather than our
1855 opinions of why or how NA works, we will stay as far as possible from public controversy.

- 1856 • **Should I ever represent NA alone?**
- 1857 • **What views does NA have about getting clean?**
- 1858 • **Should we ever have to defend our position as a fellowship? Explain.**
- 1859 • **How can we explain NA without creating controversy?**

1860 Tradition Ten restricts NA, as a fellowship, from stating opinions on outside issues. However,
1861 it places no such restriction on the individual member. In Narcotics Anonymous, we believe
1862 strongly in personal freedom. Addicts who have a desire to stop using can become members
1863 of NA simply by expressing that desire. We have no dues or fees, no pledges to sign, no

1864 promises to make to anyone, ever. Through a spiritual program, we encourage our members to
1865 develop their own understanding of a Higher Power. Even our leaders are but trusted servants,
1866 with no power to tell individual members what to do, think, or say. NA members are
1867 encouraged to think for themselves, to develop their own opinions, and to express those
1868 opinions as they see fit.

1869 The only caution Tradition Ten offers individual NA members is that, when speaking
1870 publicly, we think through what we're going to say before we say it. In certain situations,
1871 anything an NA member says will be taken as NA's opinion, even when the situation itself has
1872 nothing to do with Narcotics Anonymous and the member clearly states that the views
1873 expressed are strictly personal. It is not our fault if others misinterpret what we say as
1874 individuals; this does not, make the complications arising from such misinterpretations any
1875 less serious for NA. We may be able to avoid such complications before they arise simply by
1876 thinking carefully before we speak in public.

- 1877 • **What 3 things are not required to become a member of NA?**
- 1878 • **How do we, as individuals, keep misinterpretations of NA from happening?**
- 1879 • **Are we restricted as individual NA members? Explain.**
- 1880 • **How does Spirituality come into play in Tradition Ten?**
- 1881 • **How do we know if it's a NA opinion or an individual opinion? Explain.**
- 1882 • **What are our responsibilities as member to NA as a whole? Explain.**
- 1883 • **What is public opinion? Describe.**
- 1884 • **In what ways does PI work related to the Tenth Tradition.**

1885 But what about speaking in a recovery gathering? Does the Tenth Tradition tell us that, as
1886 individual recovering addicts, we must not talk in NA meetings about the challenges we face?

1887 No, it does not. While a particular problem may be an outside issue, its effect on our recovery
1888 is not; everything affecting a recovering addict's life is material for sharing. If a problem we
1889 are having impacts our ability to stay clean and grow spiritually, it's not an outside issue

1890 • **What is the difference between a recovery gathering and a NA meeting? Explain.**

1891 • **How do we share outside issues that affect our recovery, so we can get a solution?**

1892 **Give examples.**

1893 • **What is the difference with outside issues and our personal experiences; can we**
1894 **share both of these in a NA meeting?**

1895 • **What is freedom in Narcotics Anonymous? Explain.**

1896 • **What precautions should NA members take in speaking at NA functions? Explain.**

1897 Many things can put us off balance and challenge our recovery. We often discuss such
1898 challenges with one another at our meetings, seeking to ease our personal burdens by sharing
1899 them with our fellow NA members. We ask others to share how they have applied the
1900 principles of the program in similar circumstances, recovering their balance and strengthening
1901 their recovery. We need no one's permission to talk about such things in our meetings.

1902 But, for all that, we all know that controversial personal opinions can distract our meetings
1903 from their primary purpose. If everything is recovery material, yet we want to help our
1904 meetings retain their focus on recovery, how do we decide what to share? We can ask
1905 ourselves some questions:

1906 • **How do I really know if what I share is recovery material? Give examples.**

1907 • **Am I sharing from my experience, or am I expounding an opinion?**

1908 • **As an individual, am I dwelling in the problem or seeking the solution?**

1909 • **Do I share to draw the group together or to force the group into separate camps?**

1910 **Explain.**

1911 • **Do I make it clear that what I say, I say for myself, not for Narcotics anonymous?**

1912 • **Do I share about how I use the spiritual principles of NA in my recovery? Give**
1913 **examples.**

1914 So long as we keep our common welfare and our primary purpose in focus, we will avoid the
1915 kind of controversy that distracts us from recovery.

1916 • **What is our common welfare? Give examples.**

1917 • **What kinds of controversy can distract us from recovery? Give examples.**

1918

1919 **Applying spiritual principles**

1920 Foremost among the principles our groups and our fellowship apply in practicing Tradition
1921 Ten is the principle of unity. For all the diversity of individual opinion among our members,
1922 Narcotics Anonymous itself is united in having no opinion on any issues apart from its own
1923 program. As a fellowship, we agree to take positions only on those ideals that have drawn us
1924 together, our principles of recovery, not on the many personal opinions that might divide us.

1925 • **How is the principle of unity expressed in the Tenth Tradition?**

1926 • **What can we do as individual members to ensure that the unity of NA continues?**

1927 The Tenth Tradition is an exercise in responsibility. As groups and as a fellowship, we are
1928 responsible to carry our message to the still-suffering addict. We are responsible to provide an
1929 atmosphere in which recovering addicts can share freely with one another. To do these things
1930 effectively, we must stay as free of the distractions of public controversy as possible. We

1931 absolutely can avoid any controversies, which might arise from groups or the fellowship
1932 taking positions on issues entirely outside the scope of our program.
1933 Individual NA members responsibly exercise the Tenth Tradition by personally guarding
1934 NA's neutrality whenever and whatever they speak. Publicly, we differentiate between our
1935 personal opinions and those of NA, avoiding the expression of any personal opinions at all in
1936 circumstances where the difference might not be recognized. In meetings, NA members make
1937 it clear that what we share is our own experience, not the position of Narcotics Anonymous,
1938 providing as little opportunity as possible for misinterpretation. The way we speak as NA
1939 members often affects how others view NA; therefore, as responsible members, we speak
1940 carefully, guarding the neutrality that is so important to the welfare of us all.

- 1941 • **Is it important to make it clear that what we share is our own opinion? Why?**
- 1942 • **What is our responsibility as member, as groups, and as a fellowship in the Tenth**
1943 **Tradition?**
- 1944 • **When sharing in a NA meeting or Public Gathering is it appropriate to use “we”**
1945 **instead of “I”?**
- 1946 • **How do we fulfill our obligation to avoid controversy? Explain.**
- 1947 • **Why is it important we to stay free from distractions?**

1948 To fulfill Tradition Ten, our groups, service boards, and committees must exercise prudence
1949 in their public contacts. Elements of our fellowship are constantly in touch with others in
1950 society. Groups maintain contacts with their meeting facilities and those in their
1951 neighborhood; H&I subcommittee, with facility administrators; Public Information workers,
1952 with health professionals, charitable organizations, government agencies, and media. In all
1953 our contacts with society, we must take care not to express any opinions on issues outside the

1954 scope of our program. Such prudence will protect our credibility in the public eye on the only
1955 issue that truly concerns Narcotics Anonymous: our program of recovery from addiction.

1956 • **What is prudence?**

1957 • **How do we exercise prudence in our public contact and why?**

1958 • **What is our only concern, in our dealing with the public?**

1959 • **How do we protect the credibility of NA as individuals and as a fellowship?**

1960 By practicing the Tenth Tradition, we demonstrate our belief in the value of anonymity. All of
1961 us have our opinions. But when we speak as groups and as a fellowship, we do not take
1962 positions on the opinions of individuals. What we have to share with the public is our
1963 fellowship's message, not our personal opinion.

1964 Tradition Ten is supremely practical. The only issue upon which our fellowship is willing to
1965 publicly stake its reputation is the NA program itself. Underlying the practicality of the Tenth
1966 Tradition, however, can be found a fundamental spiritual principle, that of humility. Narcotics
1967 Anonymous does not claim to have the answer to every trouble in the world. We do not even
1968 claim that we necessarily have the only answer to addiction. When we share in public, as
1969 groups or as a fellowship, we share only our message. We talk about what we do, neither
1970 supporting nor opposing what anyone else does. We are what we are, and that's all that we
1971 are: a society of recovering drug addicts sharing their recovery with one another and offering
1972 the same to the addict who still suffers. We speak simply about our program, knowing that
1973 our effectiveness will attract more goodwill than any amount of promotion. Our program has
1974 worked for us and is available for others interested in recovery. If we can be of service, we
1975 stand ready to help.

1976 • **Define anonymity?**

- 1977 • **Why is anonymity so important to the Tenth Tradition?**
- 1978 • **The welfare of Narcotics Anonymous is at stake, the public opinion should be**
- 1979 **considered. Explain.**

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"Our public relation policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film." -TRADITION ELEVEN

2009 The Eleventh Tradition is the cornerstone of NA's public relations policy. But Tradition
2010 Eleven is only one of six traditions that address various aspects of our relations with the
2011 public. The Third and Fifth Traditions talk about the primary purpose and ultimate target of
2012 our public relation efforts. Tradition Six and Seven describe the nature of our relations with
2013 other organizations, and the Tenth Tradition details our policy concerning public
2014 pronouncement on issues outside the scope of our recovery program. Clearly, our traditions
2015 are just as concerned with our public relations as they are with our internal relations.

2016 • **What makes attraction more important than promotion?**

2017 Most NA groups have some sort of contact with the public in their everyday affairs. But the
2018 public relations spoken of in the Eleventh Tradition are more deliberate than our group's
2019 routine encounters with those outside the fellowship. The existence of a public relations
2020 "policy" implies the importance of a public relations "program" in carrying out our
2021 fellowship's primary purpose. Public information work, done properly, is not promoted;
2022 rather, it seeks to make NA attractive to those who might need us. As NA groups, service
2023 boards, and committees, we deliberately and energetically cultivate good public relations, not
2024 as an incidental result of our normal activity but as a way to better carry our message to
2025 addicts. Narcotics Anonymous is not a secret society; Tradition Eleven speaks to personal
2026 anonymity, not fellowship anonymity. The better known we are by the public, the more likely
2027 it is that addicts seeking recovery-or their friends, relatives, co-workers will think of us and
2028 know where to find us when they decide to seek help. One way to take part in NA's public
2029 relations program is to become involved in the local Public Information Subcommittee.

2030 • **Why is Tradition Eleven the cornerstone of NA's public relation policy?**

2031 • **Is NA a secret society? Explain.**

- 2032 • **Why do we have the public information subcommittee?**
- 2033 • **How is public information promoted and what does it seek to do?**
- 2034 • **Who is responsible for its support?**
- 2035 • **Who does the Public Information Subcommittee address?**
- 2036 • **How do I get involved in the Public Information Subcommittee?**
- 2037 • **What other Traditions involve public relations? Explain.**

2038 The Eleventh Tradition tells us that, when we engage in public relations activity, we speak
 2039 simply and directly of what Narcotics Anonymous is and what we do. We are not to make
 2040 exaggerated claims about NA. Our public relations efforts should be as inviting and non-
 2041 promotional as our program itself, saying to addicts and society at large, and "If you want that
 2042 we have to offer, this is what we are and how we work. If we can be of service, please let us
 2043 know."

- 2044 • **Why should we not make exaggerated claims about NA?**
- 2045 • **List examples of exaggerated claims about NA.**
- 2046 • **What does our public relations program offer? Give examples.**
- 2047 • How important is it that we always represent who we are, what we do, and
- 2048 • how we do it?

2049 Some organizations use celebrity members as public spokespersons, hoping to enhance the
 2050 organization's credibility by tying it to the celebrity's status. This may be fine for other
 2051 organizations. But Tradition Eleven tells us in no uncertain terms that, in NA's public
 2052 relations efforts, we must never do this—not with celebrity members, not with any member. If
 2053 our fellowship used a celebrity member in a public announcement about NA and the celebrity
 2054 later relapsed or otherwise suffered a loss of prestige, what good would that do to our

2055 fellowship's credibility? The same could apply to any individual member put in the public
2056 spotlight on NA's behalf. The credibility of NA's message can be greatly affected by NA's
2057 messengers. In the public eye-including press, radio, film, and all other media-we need always
2058 maintain personal anonymity.

2059 • **Why should we never use celebrities as spokespersons for Narcotics Anonymous?**

2060 • **What makes NA's message credible without using a celebrity? Explain.**

2061 • **Why shouldn't just any NA member be a spokesperson for public information?**

2062 • **Why is personal anonymity so important in public relations? Explain.**

2063 • **How do I maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films?**

2064 The same applies to other kinds of public information work. Public anonymity helps keep the
2065 focus of our public relations on the NA message, not the PI workers involved. We never do PI
2066 work alone because as a team-even a pair-better displays NA as a fellowship to the public,
2067 while individuals tend to draw attention to themselves. Teams also tend to keep the
2068 personalities of their members in check, the better to ensure that NA and not the individual
2069 addict is what we present to the public. The true statement that "an addict alone is in bad
2070 company" applies to our public relations efforts just as well as to our personal recovery.

2071 • **Why is it that we never do PI work alone?**

2072 • **What should our public information work always be focused on?**

2073 In most circumstances, though, personal anonymity is a purely personal decision. However
2074 closely we may have guarded the secret of our addiction, most of those close to us probably
2075 knew we were in trouble when we were using. Today it may be helpful to tell them about our
2076 recovery and our membership in Narcotics Anonymous.

2077 Other circumstances may also warrant the disclosure of our NA membership. When a friend
2078 tells us about the struggles another person is having with addiction, we may want to let that
2079 friend know about Narcotics Anonymous and what it has done for us. When a co-worker has a
2080 drug problem, we may want to share our experience with that person. None of us will want to
2081 indiscriminately trumpet all the gory details of our addiction to everyone in town, nor will we
2082 disclose our NA membership to everyone we meet. When we think we may be helpful to
2083 someone, it may be appropriate to share a bit of our story and the recovery we've found in
2084 Narcotics Anonymous.

- 2085 • **List several reasons why we don't disclose our NA membership to everyone. Give at**
- 2086 **least four examples.**
- 2087 • **How do we share about NA without breaking our own anonymity?**
- 2088 • **When is it appropriate to disclose our NA membership?**
- 2089 • **Name some circumstances when anonymity becomes a personal decision.**
- 2090 • **Should we make it clear when this is our own experience with NA?**
- 2091 • **When I share my experience, strength, and hope is it okay to break someone else's**
- 2092 **anonymity?**

2093 All our members play a part in our public relations, whether or not they're involved in public
2094 information work. When individual addicts demonstrate recovery at work in their lives, they
2095 become our strongest attraction, a living testament of NA's effectiveness. Seeing us now,
2096 those who know what we once were like will spread the word to those they meet that NA
2097 works. The further that message is carried, the more likely it is that addicts seeking recovery
2098 will be attracted to the warm, loving support of our fellowship.

2099 By the same token, we must remember that, wherever we go, we always represent NA to
2100 some degree. If we are seen acting poorly while we prominently display an NA logo on our T-
2101 shirt, we carry a distinctly unattractive message about our fellowship to the public. What we
2102 say and what we do reflects on our NA recovery and the NA Fellowship. As responsible NA
2103 members, we want that reflection to be a source of attraction rather than a source of
2104 embarrassment.

- 2105 • Can any recovering addict play a part in public information work? Give examples.
- 2106 • **The best public relations in Narcotics Anonymous is the recovering addict. Explain.**
- 2107 • **Give examples in which our behavior reflects on the NA fellowship, both in a positive**
2108 **and a negative light.**

2109 •

2110 **Applying spiritual principles**

2111 Tradition Eleven is an expression of our faith in the effectiveness of our program. As a
2112 fellowship, our primary purpose is to carry the recovery message to the still-suffering addict.
2113 To fulfill that primary purpose, we do not need a promotional public relations policy. To gain
2114 public goodwill and attract addicts to our meetings, all we need to do is clearly and simply
2115 describe the Narcotics Anonymous program. We need neither fanfare, overblown claims, nor
2116 celebrity endorsements to build our public relations. We have faith that the effectiveness of
2117 our fellowship, once made known, will speak for itself.

- 2118 • **What part does faith play in the Eleventh Tradition?**
- 2119 • **Do we have to sell our program of recovery? Explain.**

2120 The principle of service, critical to the application of our Eleventh Tradition, is not a passive
2121 principle. To be of maximum service to the still-suffering addict, we must energetically seek

2122 to carry our message throughout our cities, towns, and villages. Our public relations policy is
2123 based on attraction, to be sure, not promotion. But to attract the still-suffering addict to our
2124 program, we must take vigorous steps to make our program widely known. The better and
2125 broader our public relations, the better we will be able to serve.

- 2126 • **How can we use the spiritual principles of the program to attract new members?**
- 2127 • **Narcotics Anonymous is about attraction not promotion. Explain.**
- 2128 • **How can we vigorously make our program known?**
- 2129 • **How far reaching does NA extend in your city, state, country, and throughout the**
2130 **world?**

2131 Each of us has our own life, our own words, and our own story, all adding dimension and
2132 color to the message of our fellowship. But the message we carry to society is not the message
2133 of how great we are as individuals. The primary purpose of our public relations efforts is to
2134 tell the story of Narcotics Anonymous and what our program offers to the still-suffering
2135 addict. Our practice of public anonymity is built on the spiritual foundation of all our
2136 traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

- 2137 • **In your opinion, what is the story of NA?**
- 2138 • **The message of recovery is not about how great we are as individuals. Explain why.**
- 2139 • **Why is it important for us to always place principles before personalities as**
2140 **individuals and as the fellowship? Give Examples.**



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*“Anonymity is the spiritual
foundation of all our
traditions, ever reminding us
to place principles before
personalities.”*

-TRADITION TWELVE



2159 In personal recovery, we seek to replace self-will with the guidance of a Higher Power in
2160 our personal affairs. In the same way, the traditions describe a fellowship that takes its
2161 collective guidance from spiritual principles rather than individual personalities. That kind of
2162 selflessness is what the Twelfth Tradition means by the word “anonymity,” and it is the
2163 spiritual foundation upon which Narcotics Anonymous is built. Tradition Twelve is all the
2164 traditions rolled up in one, summarizing and reinforcing the message of the previous eleven.

- 2165 • **If the spiritual principles are the guiding force of the fellowship, what is our guiding**
2166 **force as individuals?**
- 2167 • **What other Traditions are present in Tradition Twelve?**
- 2168 • **The Traditions describe a fellowship that takes its collective guidance from spiritual**
2169 **principles rather than individual personalities. Explain.**
- 2170 • **What does the principle of anonymity mean to the fellowship and me?**
- 2171 • **Anonymity is essential in preserving the stability of our fellowship, making personal**
2172 **recovery possible. Recovery is a delicate thing. It grows best in a stable, supportive**
2173 **environment. Each of us and each of our groups play a part in maintaining that**
2174 **stability. Our unity is so precious that, given a choice between fulfilling our own**
2175 **wishes and preserving our fellowship’s common welfare, we put the best interests of**
2176 **NA first. We do this not only out of enlightened self-interest but also out of our sense**
2177 **of responsibility to our fellow addicts. The principle of NA unity comes before the**
2178 **fulfillment of our personal wishes.**
- 2179 • **What are the member’s part as well as the group’s part in preserving the unity of**
2180 **NA?**
- 2181 • **What is essential in preserving the stability of our fellowship?**

- 2182 • **How does anonymity assure stability?**
- 2183 • **How can I practice the principle of anonymity?**
- 2184 • **In what kind of atmosphere does our recovery grow best?**
- 2185 • **The welfare of Narcotics Anonymous should always come first. Why?**

2186 Anonymity is the primary principle underlying our tradition of membership. While we all
2187 have our personal differences, NA's only membership requirement is what we have in
2188 common, a desire to stop using. This simple principle draws the diverse personalities of those
2189 who suffer from our disease together in a common fellowship of recovery.

- 2190 • **What part does anonymity play in all of our traditions?**
- 2191 • **What are the ties that bind us all together?**
- 2192 • **We must always keep our membership requirements first and foremost. Why?**

2193 The principle of anonymity lies at the core of our fellowship's understanding of group
2194 conscience. The ideas of each individual group member have their importance, but the group
2195 takes its guidance from the collective conscience of all its members. Before the group makes a
2196 decision, its members consult their Higher Power, seeking spiritual guidance on the matter at
2197 hand. There individual voices humbly join in developing a collective sense of God's will for
2198 the group, and a strong common voice arises out of that mix to guide us all. We call this group
2199 conscience. The same principle applies to NA's concept of leadership. Though individual
2200 members serve as NA leaders, these leaders act only as our servants, carrying out their duties
2201 in accordance with the group's conscience. The principles of selfless service and collective
2202 guidance come before the personalities of our trusted servants.

- 2203 • **What is the role of anonymity in our group conscience?**

2204 • **Who are our leaders in Narcotics Anonymous and what is their responsibility to the**
2205 **fellowship?**

2206 • **Where does the direction of our groups, as well as our trusted servants, come from?**

2207 • **The unity of our groups and NA, as such, comes from the conscience of our**
2208 **membership. Why?**

2209 • **List the spiritual principles that should always come before the personalities of our**
2210 **trusted servants?**

2211 Just as the principle of anonymity guides the evolution of a group's collective conscience, so
2212 it also applies to group autonomy. Each group is, of course, entirely free to fulfill its primary
2213 purpose as it sees fit, developing its own way of doing things and its own group personality.
2214 Our fellowship places only one restriction on this near-total liberty: The group may not
2215 exercise its personality at the expense of neighboring groups or NA as a whole. The welfare
2216 of each NA group depends, to an extent, on the welfare of all NA groups. Our groups do not
2217 seek ascendancy over one another; rather, they join and cooperate to work for the greater
2218 good of the fellowship as a whole. The principle of anonymity draws our autonomous groups
2219 together for the common welfare of them all.

2220 • **What is the difference between anonymity and autonomy?**

2221 • **Why are both these principles so important in the unity of NA as a whole?**

2222 • **What do our groups seek to do in reference to the Twelfth Tradition?**

2223 • **What does "neighboring groups," mean?**

2224 • **What does autonomy allow the groups to do?**

2225 • **Name the one restriction placed on group autonomy and why is this important to the**
2226 **fellowship as a whole?**

2227 The principle of anonymity shapes our primary purpose. Although individual ambition and
2228 personal purpose may provide motivation for our development as human beings, our
2229 fellowship is guided by its collective purpose: to carry our message to the still-suffering
2230 addict. When we enter Narcotics Anonymous, we leave our personal agenda at the door. We
2231 seek to help others rather than only ourselves. This selfless principle, not personal ambition,
2232 defines the primary purpose of our groups.

- 2233 • **What shapes our primary purpose?**
- 2234 • **What is the difference between personal purpose and collective purpose?**
- 2235 • **Should we ever bring our personal agenda to Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 2236 • **What guides our fellowship?**
- 2237 • **What defines the primary purpose of our groups?**
- 2238 • **What role does anonymity play in our primary purpose?**

2239 Anonymity guides our fellowship's interactions in society. We are not a secret organization;
2240 we are happy to see our name becoming better known throughout the world with each passing
2241 year. However, we do not trade that name for the endorsement of organizations that might
2242 possibly help us further our primary purpose. Nor do we attempt to gain public influence by
2243 asserting the prestige of our fellowship's name. If we are fulfilling our primary purpose,
2244 society will see our usefulness. We will have no need to trade our endorsement for the support
2245 of others. The good spoken of us by our fellowship's friends will be sufficient
2246 recommendation.

- 2247 • **What part does anonymity play in our interaction with society?**
- 2248 • **How does anonymity apply to the Sixth Tradition?**

2249 • **How does fulfilling our primary purpose relate to the Sixth Tradition?**

2250 • **Why is it that we need no endorsement from others? Explain.**

2251 Anonymity is one of the guiding principles behind the way our groups practice the Seventh
2252 Tradition. We believe in the value of selfless generosity for its own sake. For this reason, we
2253 choose to receive support from our members anonymously. We also encourage each group as
2254 a whole to become fully self-supporting, not dependent on only one or two individual
2255 members. The principle of selfless giving, without expectation of personal distinction or
2256 reward, goes hand-in-hand with the principle of collective responsibility. Together, they
2257 assure both the spiritual solidarity and the financial stability of our groups.

2258 • **What does selfless giving mean?**

2259 • **How does the principle of selfless giving apply to the Seventh Tradition?**

2260 • **Name some things we encourage the members and groups to do?**

2261 • **Why is it important that no one member of a group do more than their fare share?**

2262 • **What two principles go hand in hand?**

2263 • **What do these principles assure our groups?**

2264 This same principle of selfless anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Eighth Tradition.
2265 In Narcotics Anonymous, we have no professional Twelfth Steppers. Rather, we use the
2266 simple language of empathy to freely share with one another the spiritual experience we call
2267 recovery. A spiritual experience cannot be bought or sold; it can only be given away. The
2268 more we freely share that experience, the more we strengthen the empathy that joins us
2269 together. This tradition reminds us to place the principle of anonymous, selfless giving before
2270 whatever personal desires we may have for recognition or reward.

2271 • **What is the difference between anonymity and empathy?**

2272 • **What is selfless anonymity?**

2273 • **It is the spiritual foundation of what Tradition? Why?**

2274 • **What simple language do we use when we share our spiritual experience? Explain.**

2275 In Narcotics Anonymous, we apply the principle of anonymity in the way we structure our
2276 service organization. Our fellowship has no authoritarian hierarchy. We create boards and
2277 committees solely to serve us, not to govern. The various elements of our service structure are
2278 guided by the primary purpose and collective conscience of our fellowship and are held
2279 directly accountable for the service they do on our behalf. Those who serve on our various
2280 boards and committees are expected to do so not to seek power, property, or prestige for
2281 themselves, but to selflessly serve the fellowship that has made their recovery possible.

2282 • **Define authoritarian hierarchy.**

2283 • **Define selfless service.**

2284 • **Why is anonymity so important in our service efforts? Explain.**

2285 • **What guides our service structure?**

2286 • **For those that serve, why is it important they do not seek power, property, or
2287 prestige for themselves?**

2288 Almost all our groups, service boards, and committees rotate different members through their
2289 service positions, rarely asking one individual to serve in a particular position of
2290 responsibility more than one or two terms in a row. The practice of rotation emphasizes our
2291 fellowship's belief in the value of anonymity in service. NA service is not primarily a
2292 personal endeavor; rather, it is the collective responsibility of our fellowship as a whole. This

2293 doesn't mean that we do not appreciate the care, experience, and insight that individuals may
2294 offer in carrying out their service duties. However, we place the principle of anonymity in
2295 service before the personalities of our individual trusted servants. Collective responsibility,
2296 not personal authority, is the guiding force behind NA service.

2297 • **The rotation of our trusted servants is very important in Narcotics Anonymous.**

2298 **Why?**

2299 • **Who is responsible for NA service? Explain why.**

2300 • **What is the guiding force behind NA service?**

2301 • **What is the difference between collective responsibility and personal authority? (i.e.**
2302 **principles before personalities)**

2303 The principle of anonymity gives form to our fellowship's public voice. Each of our many
2304 members has personal opinions on a wide range of subjects. The public message our
2305 fellowship carries, however, is the message of our collective experience in recovery from
2306 addiction. As groups and as a fellowship, we have no opinions on anything but the NA
2307 program itself. In our interactions with society, we present only the principles of our program,
2308 not our members' personal opinions about other issues.

2309 • **What is the difference in personal and fellowship anonymity and why is it so**
2310 **important?**

2311 • **What gives form to our fellowship's voice?**

2312 • **As members of NA, what do we have opinions on?**

2313 Anonymity applies not only to our public pronouncements but it is the principle underlying
2314 the whole of our fellowship's public relations policy. In our public contacts, we base the
2315 credibility of our program on NA's effectiveness, not on the personal reputation of any

2316 individual member. We seek to attract addicts and gain public goodwill solely by virtue of
2317 what we have to offer, not by grandiose promotional. Exaggerated claims about NA cannot
2318 take the place of the simple, proven validity of our message as the basis of our public relations
2319 policy.

2320 • **Describe the principle of anonymity as it is applied to our public relations policy?**

2321 • **What does the message of our fellowship consist of?**

2322 • **What is the principle underlying the whole of our public relations policy?**

2323 • **How do we seek to attract addicts and public goodwill?**

2324 • **In our interactions with society, what do we present to the public?**

2325 Twelfth Tradition anonymity or “namelessness” serves a number of practical functions in our
2326 fellowship, each of which has broad spiritual implications. By reminding us that “what’s said
2327 in this meeting stays in this meeting,” our meeting formats help foster an atmosphere in which
2328 none of us need to fear public disclosure of what we share in the intimacy of our groups. They
2329 also remind us that the message, not the messenger, is what’s most important about the
2330 sharing that occurs in our meetings.

2331 • **Anonymity in our meeting is the most precious thing we have. That namelessness,
2332 that feeling of security from the public at large. Explain.**

2333 • **Give some reasons why anonymity in our meetings is priceless.**

2334 • **When attending a NA meeting, how are we reminded about anonymity? Give
2335 examples.**

2336 • **What are the dangers of not respecting a member’s anonymity?**

2337 Twelfth Tradition anonymity also means that, in the final analysis, our personal differences
2338 make no difference: In NA, in recovery, we are all equal. It’s true that we all come into

2339 Narcotics Anonymous with our own personal histories, using patterns, educational and social
2340 backgrounds, talents, and shortcomings. But for the purpose of our own recovery, our
2341 occupational identity has no bearing on our ability to care for one another in NA. A college
2342 degree, a trust fund, illiteracy, poverty-these circumstances that so powerfully affect so many
2343 other areas of our lives will neither help nor hinder our chances at recovery. Likewise, they
2344 will not aid or impede our efforts to carry the message one addict to another.

2345 • **Our personal differences make no difference in Narcotics Anonymous. Explain.**

2346 • **Why are we all equal in Narcotics Anonymous? Explain.**

2347 • **What will neither hinder nor help our chances of recovery?**

2348 • **Will these things affect our ability to carry the message one addict to another?**

2349 • **Why does our occupational identity have no bearing on our ability to carry the**
2350 **message?**

2351 • **What part do you feel that diversity plays in the health of NA?**

2352 • **Explain the great paradox of NA recovery?**

2353 • **Why should we place spiritual principles first?**

2354 We are equal in NA membership. We are all, at last, anonymous “part of” rather than
2355 uniquely “apart from” the NA fellowship. The anonymity spoken of in our Twelfth Tradition
2356 means that, we who have suffered so long from the isolating disease of addiction, “**finally**
2357 **belong.**”

2358 • **Being a part of rather than apart from is what Narcotics Anonymous is all about.**

2359 **Explain.**

2360 Truly, anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions. Without it, the unity upon
2361 which personal recovery depends would dissolve in chaos of conflicting personalities. With it,

2362 our groups are given a body of guiding principles, our Twelve Traditions, helping them join
2363 the personal strengths of their members in a fellowship that supports and nurtures the
2364 recovery of us all.

2365 We pray that Narcotics Anonymous never becomes a gray, faceless collection of addicts
2366 without personalities. We enjoy the color, the compassion, the initiative, and the rough-and-
2367 tumble liveliness that arises from the diverse personalities of our members. In fact, our
2368 diversity is our strength. We find that the stronger our individual members are, the more
2369 strongly united our fellowship becomes. This is a great paradox of NA recovery: In joining
2370 together in a commitment to the greater good of Narcotics Anonymous, our own welfare is
2371 enhanced beyond measure. In surrendering self-will, humbly placing whatever individual
2372 power we may have at the service of the whole, we find an amazing power not only greater
2373 than our own but greater than the sum of all its parts. In serving the needs of others selflessly-
2374 anonymously-we find our own needs served, in turn, far better than we ever could have
2375 imagined. In joining anonymously in a fellowship with other recovering addicts, placing the
2376 welfare of the group ahead of our own, our own spiritual growth is enhanced beyond measure,
2377 not diminished. This is what Tradition Twelve means when it says that anonymity is the
2378 spiritual foundation of all our traditions. So long as we place spiritual principles first, our
2379 individual personalities can grow and flourish like never before, ensuring that our fellowship
2380 also continues to flourish, strong and free.

2381 Our common welfare depends upon our unity. The only hope we have of maintaining that
2382 unity amidst the tremendous diversity we find in Narcotics Anonymous is by the application
2383 of certain common principles: those found in the Twelve Traditions. So long as we place the
2384 practice of those principles before the exercise of our individual personalities, all will be well.

- 2385 • **Unity and anonymity are the keys to all that we do in Narcotics Anonymous. The**
2386 **responsibility is all of ours as members of this fellowship. Explain.**
- 2387 • **Diversity is our strength. Explain.**
- 2388 • **What enhances our own welfare? Give examples.**
- 2389 • **What happens when we put spiritual principles first?**
- 2390 • **What does our common welfare depend on?**
- 2391

