



The Voice Within

I. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon **AA. UNITY**. II. 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. III. The **ONLY REQUIREMENT** for A.A. membership is a **DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING**. IV. Each **GROUP** should be **AUTONOMOUS** except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. V. Each group has but one primary purpose—to **CARRY ITS MESSAGE** to the alcoholic who still suffers. VI. An A.A. group ought **NEVER ENDORSE, FINANCE** or **LEND** the **AA. NAME** to any related facility or outside enterprise; lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. VII. Every A.A. group ought to be fully **SELF-SUPPORTING**, declining outside contributions. VIII. Alcoholics Anonymous should **REMAIN FOREVER NONPROFESSIONAL**, but our service centers may employ special workers. IX. A.A., as such, ought **NEVER BE ORGANIZED**; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. X. Alcoholics Anonymous has **NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES**; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy. XI. Our public relations policy is based on **ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION**; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. XII. **ANONYMITY** is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The Twelve Traditions: A Distillation of AA Experience *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated*

As newcomers, many of us say to ourselves “Let the group officers worry about the Traditions. I’m just an average member. They’re rules for running groups, aren’t they? And everybody tells me ‘There are no rules in AA!’” Then we look closer, and find that the Traditions are *not* rules, and they are *not* just for officers. They have deep meaning for each of us, as the Twelve Steps do.

I *came* to Alcoholics Anonymous and looked at the Twelve Steps. **I wanted to change them**; I had some better ideas, some new and progressive ideas that originated from my bountiful intellect and sense of uniqueness. I stayed long enough to know that they were complete and appropriate just the way they were. **Who did I think I was, anyway?**

I *stayed* in Alcoholics Anonymous and looked at the Twelve Traditions. **I wanted to change them**; I had some new and progressive ideas that originated from my bountiful intellect and ego-centric assumption that AA should be all things to all people. I stayed long enough to know that they were complete and appropriate for us just the way they are. **Who do I think I am, anyway?**

Wanting to rewrite the Twelve Traditions and the message of Alcoholics Anonymous speaks as much to my lack of humility as wanting to rewrite the Twelve Steps.

This program was “hammered out on the anvils of experience”. Today, I choose not to add any of my editing to a set of Steps and Traditions that have saved millions, just as they are. I try to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous, not “my” message. How does it work? It works just fine!

June 2010

DISTRICT 12 NH ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

"Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

7th Tradition

I had gone to a meeting the other night and after the meeting my friend who was helping me put the chairs away, asked me if this clean up was an elected position. He (being relatively new) wanted to know why the same three people were always putting the chairs away. He then asked me the statement/question that shocked me - "How come you're helping put the chairs away, I thought the newcomer was supposed to do that"?

I could be wrong but I always thought that fully self supporting meant being active also, chairs, commitments, greeting. I have to take responsibility for my actions because the newcomers are not only hearing my words but watching my actions. If I leave after the Lord's Prayer and leave my coffee cup and chair where they are what does that say about my sobriety? The big book warns of complacency and of resting on my laurels; I have been out there in the past, and it didn't get any better. I see the newcomer come in and from the look in his eyes I see that fact hasn't changed. A self appraisal is good for me and my thinking. Am I too sober to pick up my coffee cup and chair? Am I too sober to go on a commitment with my home group? Am I too sober to greet the newcomer? So on and so forth. I am responsible not only to be there financially for my home group but to help support it physically.

Anonymous

New Meeting Place:

The North End Group now meets at 1850 Elm St. (Corner of Webster) in Manchester at 10:00 to 11:30 am on Sunday. Parking in the back or on the street out front. Meeting is downstairs.

The theme of the August 2010 issue of the *Voice Within* will be:

'Passing It On'.

Send us your thoughts, your article, or your input! Deadline is August 1, 2010.

2010 Summer Outing

District Twelve's Function Committee is sponsoring the **annual Summer Outing on Saturday July 10, 2010.**

The event will be held at Pawtuckaway State Park in Nottingham, NH, from 10 AM to 5 PM. Tickets are \$15.00 each in advance or \$20.00 at the gate. The ticket includes entrance fee to the park and all facilities.

There will be games, water activities, meetings. A great time for all. The Function Committee will be supplying grills, a continental breakfast, hamburgers and hot dogs and various refreshments throughout the day.

'A.A.'s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the fellowship itself. They outline the means by which A.A. maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows.' Pg#15 A.A.'s 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.

How often does a question come up, especially at group business meetings, asking if what we are discussing is "*traditionally sound*"? Gratefully I hear it asked often at my home group. We are a strongly opinionated bunch and the Traditions are a constant beacon of reason in stormy times.

A brown paper bag book cover holds together my copy of the 12 + 12. The binders are falling apart but this prized possession has accompanied me to every group business, district or area meeting over the last 25 years. Pages are scarred with different shades of highlighter and crisscrossed with asterisks and parenthesis. Each mark on a page is a remembrance of a situation where that question of Tradition was brought into play.

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(continued)

Today in A.A. we are so blessed. I know of no other association that has such detailed instructions on structure and purpose. Bill Wilson took the time to explain what our fellowship had experienced as we grew. The details discussing what worked or did not work. The how and why of this miracle.

One of the most joyous experiences of my A.A. life was discussing our Traditions with my dear friend Conner. Conner passed on a few years ago but those discussions with her are tattooed into my memory. Conner, Marise, Peter and I would spend hours discussing the historical stages and various growing pains of this program we all love so much.

Searcy Whaley was an original member of AA and one of Conner's mentors. Conner beamed with great affection when she shared stories about Searcy. This is one of my favorites.

Bill W was producing the Traditions on napkins and scraps of paper as he traveled down his AA path. During a trip down to Texas he got together with Searcy seeking his opinion regarding these suggested 'guidelines' that he was putting together for groups. Searcy read a few and told Bill that they might be okay for the rest of the country but would be useless down in Texas as down here "We all love each other".

The beautiful turn to the story was that a few years later Searcy contacted Bill and asked when those 'Traditions' would be finished. Seems even down in Texas A.A. was experiencing growing pains. Once again an all powerful presence was guiding our development.

Sponsorship has many rewards. A highlight for me occurs after we finish working together through the 12 steps. We then continue on for the next 12 weeks sitting at my kitchen table and reading the 12 traditions. This time with my sponsees has become a 'tradition' for me, rewarding beyond anything I can put into words.

The questions and answers are all there: Common Welfare, Ultimate Authority, Requirements for Membership. (1,2,3) Group Affiliation, Group Primary Purpose or Endorsements. (4,5,6) Outside Contributions, Professionalism, Power to Direct or Govern, (7,8,9) Our Means of Survival, Public Relations and Gaining Genuine Humility. (10, 11,12).

These wonderful essays clarify and assist in understating these 12 points of light. Once again, as always, I am overwhelmed with an attitude of gratitude for those who traveled this path before us. They mapped out directions, pointed out the pratfalls and gave guidance by paying forward shared guidance to us via their experiences. ALK. North End Group

Using Tradition Three within the AA Fellowship

Recently, one of my sister-sponsees told me that she found herself in the strange position of sponsoring a woman who had drunk only once in her life. I have had this same kind of sponsorship experience a number of times in the past couple of years.

I was taught that someone is a member of AA when they choose to be. My experience had been that sometimes newcomers to AA did not acknowledge or really know that they were alcoholics but came to an AA meeting for other reasons. As the fog lifted, they each came to say, "Yes, I too am an alcoholic." I never pushed anyone to admit she was an alcoholic.

But more recently, I have found myself sponsoring people who said they had never drunk. This was not a case of them eventually seeing, as things became more clear, the impact that drinking had on their lives. They had never been in any trouble with their drinking. One had never drunk at all. It was weird. I actually asked my sponsor, "How do I sponsor someone who doesn't have a problem with alcohol?" **The answer: I cannot.**

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I encouraged these women to get help in other places, from people qualified to help them with their specific problems. **To have to say to someone: "Alcoholics Anonymous is for people who have a drinking problem" felt strange. You'd think that would be obvious.**

We learn in Tradition Three that we must be inclusive, barring no one who is an alcoholic from membership. As the Third Tradition essay in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* says, "We aren't a bit afraid you'll harm us, never mind how twisted or violent you may be." Rules for membership do not work and go against the principles of Tradition Three. **But Alcoholics Anonymous is not a catch-all, the solution for everything.**

I thought this was really interesting. Regarding problems other than alcohol, the pamphlet *Information on Alcoholics Anonymous* published by AA World Services says: "Alcoholism and drug addiction are often referred to as 'substance abuse' or 'chemical dependency.' Alcoholics and nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend open AA meetings. But only those with a *drinking* problem may attend *closed* meetings or become AA members. People with problems other than alcoholism are eligible for AA membership *only* if they have a drinking problem."

Dr. Vincent Dole, a pioneer in methadone treatment for heroin addicts and for several years a former trustee on the General Service Board of AA, made the following statement: **"The source of strength in AA is its single-mindedness. The mission of AA is to help alcoholics. AA limits what it is demanding of itself and its associates and its success lies in its limited target. To believe that the process that is successful in one line guarantees success for another would be a very serious mistake."**

Is a drug a drug? Yes. And a fruit is a fruit. But as one much-loved old-timer used to say, "An apple isn't an orange." anonymous

This edition of the *Voice Within* was made possible through the 7th Tradition. We encourage submissions that are in keeping with the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. **From one-liners, to poetry, to 400-800 articles of experience, strength and hope, or experiences with sponsors, sponsees, home group, jobs in AA, experiences with the Steps and Traditions, etc.**

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Did You Know?

"Principles Over Personalities" slogan has nothing to do with interaction between members. It's taken from the Twelfth Tradition, which places the principles of humility and anonymity over personal distinction.

Pathway to Sobriety, which meets Tuesday 07:00 PM - 08:15 PM at 321 S Main St. needs your support!

**GET INVOLVED
IN AA'S LEGACY OF SERVICE
District 12 Website:**

www.aadistrict12.org

There are a number of different committees that provide services to District 12; everything from working to put on functions to bringing commitments into jails and institutions to working with the Professional Community. Contact the chair of one of the committees that you are interested in.

**ATTEND A DISTRICT 12 MONTHLY
MEETING**

3rd Sunday of the month from 6:00 - 8:00
PM

St. Raphael's Church Hall

Ferry St Manchester NH

**Help to ensure AA is here for today's alcoholic
as well as future alcoholics!
For that WE are responsible**

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