

1 **NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS GUIDE TO THE TWELVE TRADITIONS**

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

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

20           It is very important that we understand and abide by our Traditions. The very survival of  
21 our Fellowship is at stake. By these principles we are committed to one another, not only to those  
22 addicts who are here but those yet to come. The Traditions were built upon anonymity, the  
23 spiritual foundation from which we grow. Applying the Traditions is an obligation to us all.  
24 Despite our personal views or feelings, we must keep our Traditions first. This guide is designed

25 to help us understand the Traditions and to work through any differences that we might have.

## 26 **TRADITION ONE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

45       Our First Tradition encourages not only our members but also our groups to place our  
46 common welfare first. Most groups conduct most of their affairs on their own. In attending to the  
47 details of their daily routines, autonomous NA groups may lose sight of the bigger picture. In the  
48 larger frame, each group is a strand in the supporting fabric of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole;

49 without that fabric, there would be no NA. The importance of our unity encourages our groups to  
50 look to the welfare of the worldwide NA Fellowship before their own.

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

52 **How important is it that our groups conduct their affairs with the whole NA  
53 Fellowship in mind?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

86 Communication goes a long way toward building and enhancing our common welfare.  
87 With an attitude of open-mindedness, we seek to understand other perspectives. Reports may tell  
88 us a lot about what's happening in other groups or areas, but our common welfare depends on  
89 more than just information. True communication involves an effort on our part to "listen" as we  
90 read or hear reports, seeking a better understanding of the needs and problems of both our own  
91 group and other groups, wherever they may be. Encouraging each member to speak openly from  
92 the heart enhances our ability to work together. Regular reports, thorough discussion, and active  
93 listening lead us to the kind of understanding that helps us find creative solutions that benefit us  
94 all. Today's decisions may affect tomorrow's members. When we think of solutions to our current  
95 problems, it's not hard to consider the needs of our group, our area, our region, or even the  
96 worldwide Fellowship. But it's also important to remember the "unseen member" in our  
97 discussion-the member yet to come. When we work to ensure the vitality of NA, we're not  
98 working just for ourselves but for those yet to join us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

115 **Applying spirituals principles**

116       In the Twelve Steps of NA we learn to apply principles to better our lives. Moved by the  
117 miracle of personal recovery, we reach out to share that miracle with others. This is the essence of  
118 being of service in NA. In supporting our unity, we first apply principles to guide our own  
119 behavior. As groups, we use the same principles for guidance. That guidance creates a sense of  
120 unity that strengthens our ability to reach out to others, enhancing our common welfare. Some of  
121 the principles that seem particularly important to unity include surrender and acceptance,  
122 commitment, selflessness, love, and anonymity. As we practice these principles, we will find

123 others who strengthen unity as well. Surrender and acceptance open the door to unity. As our trust  
124 in a Higher Power grows, it gets easier to let go of our personal desires and stop fighting for what  
125 we want. With an attitude of surrender, working together in a group becomes easier. Tradition  
126 One presents a picture of addicts working together worldwide to support each other's recovery.  
127 We try to remember this goal in all our actions, as individuals or as groups. If we find that our  
128 personal desires or the aims of our group conflict with that ideal, unity asks us to surrender our  
129 own desires and accept guidance that enhances the greater good of Narcotics Anonymous. Only  
130 by deciding to be part of that whole can we support the unity so essential to our personal survival.

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

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

133         Commitment is another essential ingredient in unity. Personal commitment to our shared  
134 sense of purpose is one of the ties that bind us together. When we know that we belong in NA,  
135 and when we make a commitment to stay, we become a part of the greater whole. Our sense of  
136 belonging is closely related to our degree of commitment to recovery in NA. As groups, the  
137 combined strength of that commitment is a powerful force in serving others. With that strong  
138 commitment, we are able to carry the message of hope that will support us all in our recovery.  
139 Commitment is a decision supported by our belief in NA as a way of life. Regular meeting  
140 attendance is one way in which we live out that belief. Greeting newcomers as they arrive or  
141 giving our telephone number to someone who needs help also reflects our decision. Sponsorship,  
142 sharing in meetings, setting up chairs before meetings—all these are ways in which we express  
143 our commitment. Each member finds a level of service that fits comfortably into a balanced  
144 program of recovery.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

157 Love is a principle that is expressed in the practice of goodwill toward one another. We  
158 contribute to unity in our meetings by exercising loving care in the way we speak to and the way  
159 we treat one another. We try to share our experience, strength, and hope in a way, which  
160 demonstrates that recovery, is available in Narcotics Anonymous. An atmosphere of love and care  
161 in our meetings helps members feel comfortable and safe. The love we show each other attracts  
162 newcomers and strengthens us all, fueling our sense of unity and common welfare.

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

164 **What is unconditional love?**

165 Anonymity, the spiritual foundation of our Traditions, supports NA unity as well. When  
166 we apply anonymity to the First Tradition, we overlook the differences that would separate us. In  
167 the context of unity, anonymity means that the message of recovery is for every addict who wants  
168 it. We learn to set aside our prejudices and focus on our common identity as addicts. Each of us  
169 has an equal right to and responsibility for the well-being of Narcotics Anonymous. Just as  
170 anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Traditions, the unity spoken of in the First Tradition  
171 is the practical foundation on which we may build strong and successful groups. With unity as our  
172 practical foundation, we find that our relationship with one another is more important than any

173 issue that may arise to divide us. No problem or disagreement is more significant than our need  
174 for each other's support. The fundamental importance of our common welfare strengthens our  
175 understanding of all the other Traditions. Many questions can be answered simply by determining  
176 how the action we contemplate will affect the unity of the Fellowship. Will it serve to divide us,  
177 or will it bring us closer together?

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

179 **TRADITION TWO**

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

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

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

194 The Second Tradition concerns the nature of leadership in NA. We have learned that  
195 leadership by example and by selfless service works for our Fellowship. Direction and manipulation  
196 fail. We choose not to have presidents, matters, or directors. Instead we have secretaries, treasurers  
197 and representatives. These titles imply service rather than control. Our experience shows that if a



198 group becomes an extension of the personality of a leader or member, it loses its effectiveness. An  
199 atmosphere of recovery in our groups is one of our most valued assets, and we must guard it carefully,  
200 lest we lose it to politics and personalities.

201         Those of us who have been involved in service or in getting a group started sometimes have a  
202 hard time letting go. Egos, unfounded pride, and self-will destroy a group if given authority. We must  
203 remember that positions have been placed in trust, that we are trusted servants, and that at no time do  
204 any of us govern. Narcotics Anonymous is a God-given program, and we can maintain our group in  
205 dignity only with group conscience and God's love.

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

- 210 • **What is group conscience?**
- 211 • **Why is it important that we invite God into that process?**
- 212 • **What is a trusted servant?**

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

- 216 • **Are we governed by any of our chosen leaders? Why?**
- 217 • **What is effective service?**
- 218 • **How can I serve?**
- 219 • **Who is the ultimate authority?**
- 220 • **What is the difference between ego and egotism?**
- 221 • **How can I keep my ego from interfering with the group's conscience?**
- 222 • **What is meant by unfounded pride?**

223 • **If self-will destroys the group, how does selflessness put us in line with a God consciousness?**

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

225 Personal service arises from the application of principles. Ideally, personal service is founded  
226 in a relationship with the same Higher Power that guides our personal recovery. This Higher Power  
227 also guides the various elements of our fellowship. Our direction in service comes from a God of our  
228 understanding, whether we serve as individuals, as a group, or as a service board or committee.  
229 Whenever we come together, we seek the presence and guidance of this loving Higher Power. This  
230 direction then guides us through all our actions.

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

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

239 • **What part does my Higher Power play in my service efforts?**

240 • **Why can't my service efforts be effective without practicing spiritual principles?**

241 • **Why is it so important that we reach the conscience of the group?**

242 • **How does our group decisions affect the Fellowship as a whole?**

243 • **How do my service efforts affect the Fellowship as a whole?**

244 When we practice Steps and apply principles, we develop a conscience, an awareness  
245 of our behavior and its effects on others and ourselves. This conscience is a reflection of our  
246 relationship with a Higher Power. It reflects the expression we receive from the God of our  
247 understanding and our commitment to follow that guidance. Whenever we come together in

248 our groups and apply these same principles, a collective conscience exists. Our relationship  
249 with a loving Higher Power, when consulted regularly, guides us in fulfilling our primary  
250 purpose while preserving our unity and common welfare.

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

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

262       Only when we listen for direction of our Higher Power are we able to hear it. The conscience  
263 of a group is most clearly expressed when every member is considered an equal. A Higher Power  
264 works through all of us, regardless of clean time or experience. Group conscience always exists, but  
265 we are not always willing or able to hear it or allow its expression. Hearing group conscience may take  
266 time and patience. A flexible approach invites a loving Higher Power into our group conscience  
267 process.

- 268 • **Why is communication so important in group conscience?**
- 269 • **Why is it important that everyone be heard?**
- 270 • **How can we find solutions to our daily problems?**
- 271 • **Is clean-time a requirement for group conscience? Why?**
- 272 • **How important is patience in this process?**

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

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

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

286           This connection with the group conscience is enhanced when, as trusted servants, we carry a  
287 continuous flow of information that is honest and open; it is further strengthened when we seek to  
288 serve, not to govern. We help form the conscience of our group or committee, through the direction of  
289 a Higher Power, by presenting a complete and unbiased stream of information. The ideas and direction  
290 of the group, then, are conveyed in our representation of that conscience.

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

295 • **What should I look for when choosing a trusted servant?**

296 • **How do I seek my Higher Power's guidance in this decision?**

297 • **What part does trust and faith play in choosing a trusted servant?**

298 • **What is my responsibility to the trusted servant after they've been entrusted?**

299 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

306 • **What does surrender mean in the context of Tradition Two?**

307 • **How do I know when I have surrendered?**

308 • **Why is it so important that the needs of the fellowship be met?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

325 By practicing humility in our efforts to serve, we make room for open-mindedness. We  
326 remember that, just as we need the experience of other addicts to recover, so do we need their  
327 direction and ideas in order to serve. We learn to actively cultivate our listening skills, using our ears  
328 more than our mouths in conversation. When we are open-minded, we hear and accept solutions  
329 offered by others in the development of group conscience. Application of this principle teaches us to  
330 set aside our prejudices in order to work with others. By practicing open-mindedness, we nurture an  
331 attitude of goodwill toward others and become willing to serve with our common good in mind. Only  
332 with an open mind can we recognize the guidance of a loving Higher Power.

- 333 • **What is the role of open-mindedness in a group conscience?**
- 334 • **How is listening the key to open-mindedness?**
- 335 • **What part does humility play in open-mindedness?**
- 336 • **How does being open-minded take me out of self?**

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

- 342 • **What is integrity?**
- 343 • **How do I know when I am practicing integrity?**
- 344 • **What part does honesty play in integrity?**

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

- 350 • **What is the relationship between anonymity and the group conscience?**

351 • **How do I practice anonymity in the context of Tradition Two?**

352 • **Who has a part in making up a group conscience?**

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

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

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

367 • **What does selfless service mean to me?**

368 • **Who benefits from my service efforts?**

369 • **In what ways am I benefited spiritually?**

370 TRADITION THREE

371 **“The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.”**

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

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

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

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

- 391   • **What happens when I try to measure the desire of others?**
- 392   • **Who decides if I can be a member in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 393   • **How does the Fellowship grow as a result of the Third Tradition?**
- 394   • **How can I extend care and concern to foster a sense of belonging in newcomers?**

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



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

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

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

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

426           Addicts attend their first meeting for many reasons. Our motives for coming to NA aren't  
427 particularly important. The desire to stop using may not be clearly realized; it may be no more than a  
428 subtle yearning for relief from pain. But that yearning often drives us to seek solutions we might

429 otherwise never consider. Often the experience of hearing other addicts share about recovery will  
430 ignite the desire to stop using. Others come to a meeting, hear the message, and return to active  
431 addiction. Those who return to meetings after relapse often say their desire to stop using was born  
432 from the pain of relapse. We come to NA for many reasons, but we stay to recover when we find and  
433 keep the desire to stop using.

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

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

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

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

451         Many of us know when we walk into our first meeting that we're addicts. It's not something  
452 we have to decide; it's a fact of life. Membership, however, means more than just being an addict; it  
453 means making a decision. If we identify with what we hear in NA and relate with the people we meet,  
454 we will want what NA offers. So long as we have a desire to stop using, we are free to make the

455 decision to join Narcotics Anonymous. Then, once we've made that decision, we need to follow it with  
456 a commitment to the principles of NA. With that commitment, we set ourselves squarely on the road  
457 of recovery.

- 458 • **What does being a member of Narcotics Anonymous mean to me?**
- 459 • **What does commitment mean in the context of the Third Tradition?**
- 460 • **Why is it important for me to continue to identify myself as an addict?**

#### 461 Applying spiritual principles

462           The Third Tradition encourages freedom from judgment. It leads us on the path of service  
463 toward an attitude of helpfulness, acceptance, and unconditional love. As we've seen in the previous  
464 Traditions, our path of service arises from the application of principles. Some of the principles that  
465 support this Tradition include tolerance, compassion, anonymity, and humility.  
466 Tolerance reminds us that judgment is not our task. The disease of addiction does not exclude anyone.  
467 NA, likewise, cannot exclude any addict who desires to stop using. We learn to be tolerant of addicts  
468 from different backgrounds than ours, remembering that we are not better than any other addict in a  
469 meeting.

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

- 476 • **How can we practice tolerance as a group?**
- 477 • **What does tolerance mean to me as a member?**
- 478 • **What can I do as a member to show tolerance?**
- 479 • **How can intolerance affect both the individual and the group as a whole?**

480           Compassion lends kindness to all our efforts in service to others. With compassion as the  
481 foundation of our actions, we learn to support members through any difficulties they may experience.  
482 All too often, we are quick to judge the quality of another's recovery or willingness. Tradition Three  
483 asks us to set aside our self-righteousness. Because the only requirement for membership is a quality  
484 we cannot measure, the right to judge another's desire is denied us. Our attitude ought to be one of  
485 loving acceptance toward all addicts, regardless of any other problems they may experience. Generous  
486 application of compassion is more therapeutic to the suffering addict than a free application of  
487 judgment.

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

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

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

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

504           The practice of anonymity ensures the integrity of Tradition Three. In the spirit of anonymity,  
505 we remember that no individual member or group is more important than the message we carry. The

506 single requirement for membership helps ensure that no addict need die without having a chance to  
507 recover. We celebrate our equality and the freedom we share by welcoming any addict who has the  
508 desire to stop using.

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

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

## 517 **TRADITION FOUR**

518 “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a  
519 whole.”

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

527         Group autonomy gives groups the creative freedom to find individual ways to carry the  
528 message. NA is made up of a vastly diverse assortment of addicts joined together by the strength of  
529 their mutual commitment to recovery. We speak many different languages and live in different  
530 cultures; one type of meeting will not appeal to every addict who comes to Narcotics Anonymous. In

531 order to reach every addict who may need our help and to support the recovery of every member,  
532 groups have the freedom to vary their format and other meeting characteristics. Each group has the  
533 freedom to pursue our primary purpose in the manner it feels will work best.

- 534 • **Why is creative freedom so important in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 535 • **What is autonomy in the context of Tradition Four?**
- 536 • **How can we best achieve our primary purpose?**
- 537 • **Why is it important that each group have its own character?**
- 538 • **Being as diverse of a Fellowship as we are, why is it important that we vary in format in our**  
539 **groups?**

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

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

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

555 One of the most common ways in which groups express their autonomy is in the choice of  
556 meeting format. Most NA communities will offer a number of different types of meetings, from

557 speaker meetings to Step studies to topic discussion or any other format or combination of formats that  
558 meets the needs of local members. Some meetings will be open to the public, while others will be for  
559 addicts only. Larger communities may offer several different types of meetings each night. Some  
560 addicts will hear the message of recovery better in one type of meeting, while others prefer another  
561 format. An NA community that offers a variety of meetings is more likely to reach a broad cross-  
562 section of addicts. In a spirit of cooperation, we try to respect the autonomy of other groups by  
563 allowing them the freedom to carry the message in whatever manner seems best to them.  
564 In the spirit of autonomy, many groups hold meetings that appeal to members with similar needs. The  
565 freedom from judgement expressed in the Third Tradition is aimed at helping any addict anywhere  
566 feel comfortable in NA. No matter how a group structures its meetings, all NA groups are encouraged  
567 to keep their focus, recovery from the disease of addiction. As long as a group observes the Twelve  
568 Traditions and espouses the Twelve Steps of NA in its meetings, it may consider them Narcotics  
569 Anonymous meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



609 • **Why is the image of NA so important in the community?**

610 • **Who is responsible for portraying that image?**

611 • **What can we do as individual members to help in this process?**

612 • **Why is a group inventory so important?**

613 • **How can we benefit from a group inventory?**

614 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

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

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

625 • **What can we as members do to show responsibility for the Fellowship as a whole?**

626 • **How can excessive autonomy have a negative effect on other groups or NA as a whole?**

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

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

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

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

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

645 Anonymity applied to the Fourth Tradition reminds us that each group has an equal place in  
646 the Fellowship of NA. Larger groups are not more important than smaller groups; older groups are not  
647 "better" than newer groups. While all groups have the freedom to apply principles in whatever ways  
648 seem best to them, those same principles make each group an equal partner in recovery. Each group  
649 bears an equal responsibility in the work and in the reputation of NA.

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

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

- 658 • **How does anonymity apply to the Fourth Tradition?**

- 659 • **Why isn't one group more important than another group?**
- 660 • **What part does each group play in the overall reputation of NA as a whole?**
- 661 • **Having the freedom to run our groups as we please; how important is it that we stay within**  
662 **the confines of the Traditions of NA?**
- 663 • **How can we preserve the unity of NA?**
- 664 • **What part does our Higher Power play in this process?**

665 **TRADITION FIVE**

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

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

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

- 681 • **What is the primary purpose of NA?**
- 682 • **As a member, what is the message that I carry?**
- 683 • **In what ways can I best carry this message?**

684 • **Do I limit who I carry the message to?**

685 • **What is the role of the group in carrying a clear message?**

686 The groups' focus on carrying the message is so important to the survival of NA that it is  
687 called our primary purpose. That means it is the most important thing we do. Nothing ought to take  
688 precedence over it. This is the most basic guideline by which groups may examine their motives and  
689 their actions.

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

697 • **What is the message that we carry as a group?**

698 • **How can we best carry the message of recovery?**

699 • **As members, what can we do to further our primary purpose?**

700 • **How important is it that the group and I portray a positive image in NA?**

701 • **How do we keep in check our actions and examine our motives?**

702 Many distracting influences can divert us from our primary purpose. But each time our focus  
703 is diverted from our primary purpose, the addict seeking recovery loses out. Other influences can  
704 distort our group's focus on its primary purpose. From the money members contribute, our groups pay  
705 rent on their meeting space, buy literature and supplies, conduct activities, and support NA services.  
706 All of these can either help further our primary purpose or distract us from our focus. Some groups  
707 seek to outdo others with luxurious meeting spaces, extravagant refreshments, huge supplies of  
708 literature, and elaborate activities. When we do this, our focus is distracted away from our primary  
709 purpose and onto money, property, and prestige. We should try to establish a reputation for carrying

710 the message—nothing more, nothing less. Money, literature, and meeting space are tools we can use to  
711 help us carry the message; however, they should serve us, not rule us.

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

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

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

- 729 • **How well are we carrying the message of recovery?**
- 730 • **What addicts are not being reached by our group?**
- 731 • **How can we make our meetings more accessible?**
- 732 • **What can we do to make all members feel more welcome?**
- 733 • **Has the atmosphere of recovery diminished?**
- 734 • **Would a change in our meeting format strengthen that atmosphere?**

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

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

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

- 747 • **Does our group set aside time to study the Steps and Traditions?**
- 748 • **Why is it so important that we not exclude any addict seeking recovery?**
- 749 • **Why is it so important that we consider the needs of the whole NA community?**
- 750 • **What can we do as groups to make NA attractive to the still suffering addict?**
- 751 • **How does the group carry the message to more experienced members who have drifted**  
752 **away?**
- 753 • **In what ways have I thought I had outgrown the NA program?**

#### 754 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

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

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

- 769       • **What is integrity?**
- 770       • **How do I practice integrity in my group?**
- 771       • **What can I hope to achieve through integrity?**
- 772       • **What part does integrity play in Tradition Five?**

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

- 778       • **Why is it my responsibility as a member to make sure that our primary purpose is kept?**
- 779       • **How can I show that responsibility?**
- 780       • **What is the responsibility of the group?**
- 781       • **How does the group that responsibility to the Fellowship of NA as a whole?**

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

- 786       • **What part does unity play in the Tradition Five?**

- 787 • **Who is responsible for the unity of NA?**  
788 • **What can I do as a member to maintain unity in my group?**  
789 • **What can my group do to maintain the unity of NA as a whole?**  
790 • **Why is it important for my group to actively participate in the Area Service Committee and**  
791 **its various subcommittees?**

792 In anonymity, our personal differences are insignificant compared to our primary purpose.  
793 When we come together as a group, our first task is to carry the message; all else ought to be set aside.  
794 Groups can practice the Fifth Tradition by reminding their members that the recovery message, not  
795 individual personalities, is primary in Narcotics Anonymous.

- 796 • **What is the importance of anonymity?**  
797 • **What does anonymity mean in the context of Tradition Five?**  
798 • **Why is the message more important than the messenger?**  
799 • **What can I do to maintain anonymity in the group as well as the Fellowship at large?**  
800 • **How does anonymity apply in the context of service to the Fellowship?**  
801 • **Why should we bring our skills to service work but leave behind our titles?**

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

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



810 **TRADITION SIX**

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

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

- 821 • **What are some ways that we can carry the message?**
- 822 • **Who’s responsible for carrying the message of NA?**
- 823 • **What other organizations do we come in contact with?**
- 824 • **Why is it so important that we be careful with outside interests?**

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

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

- 835 • **How is our primary purpose defined?**
- 836 • **What can we do to insure that our primary purpose is kept?**
- 837 • **What is an endorsement?**
- 838 • **How could accepting money from outside enterprises cause us problems?**
- 839 • **Why shouldn't we lend our name?**

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

- 850 • **What is the importance of the group setting and maintaining healthy boundaries?**
- 851 • **How can we fall into the trap of endorsing, financing or lending our name to outside**  
852 **enterprises?**
- 853 • **How is our primary purpose diverted when we do so?**

854 We must exist in the world. It is not possible to be entirely separate, evading all contact with  
855 outside agencies. Not only is it impossible, it's not a good idea. Cooperation with others is healthy for  
856 Narcotics Anonymous. Contacts between our groups and the public help others understand NA better.  
857 They help increase public goodwill toward NA. They lead doctors, teachers, friends, and relatives to  
858 recommend NA to addicts who want recovery. They help us carry the message to addicts who cannot  
859 get to regular meetings. Letting others know who we are and what we offer increases the chance that  
860 addicts seeking recovery will hear our message.

861 • **What is the importance of keeping outside contact with the public?**

862 • **Why is public information work a must?**

863 • **What part can these contacts play in helping to spread our message?**

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

874 • **What is the difference between cooperation and endorsement?**

875 • **Why shouldn't we offer reduced rates only to addicts from specific outside agencies?**

876 • **Why shouldn't we ever align ourselves with outside enterprises?**

877 • **Though it is important for us to cooperate with others outside the Fellowship, how are we**  
878 **hurt by our endorsements?**

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

885 • **Why is it so important that we not confuse our primary purpose?**

886 • **Why is using only NA literature and speakers important to fulfilling our primary purpose?**

887 • **Why should we separate ourselves from outside facilities and enterprises?**

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

895           It is important to remember that we as NA members and groups are responsible for observing  
896 our Twelve Traditions. The facilities in which we meet do not have this responsibility; neither do other  
897 organizations. If it appears that some outside organization or facility is compromising our traditions,  
898 we are responsible to discuss their actions with them. While we cannot demand that they change their  
899 behavior, a reasonable approach and open discussion will often lead to mutually satisfactory solutions.

900 • **What are our motives for where we hold our meetings?**

901 • **Who is the responsible for following our Traditions?**

902 • **How should we handle our disagreements with outside facilities or organizations?**

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

907           Many of us use a variety of resources in our personal programs of recovery and spiritual  
908 growth. Not all of them, however, relate directly to NA’s primary purpose. Do we imply an  
909 endorsement of a related facility or outside enterprise when we share in a NA meeting about the good  
910 things we’ve found elsewhere? Do we distract other members at the meeting from NA’s message of  
911 recovery or give new members the wrong impression about the Narcotics Anonymous program? No

912 one can answer these questions for us. But by answering these questions for ourselves, we can each  
913 help free our group of problems that could divert us from our primary purpose.

- 914 • **Why is it so important that we keep the forum at our meetings in line with our primary**  
915 **purpose?**
- 916 • **Name some ways we could become distracted from our primary purpose in our meetings?**
- 917 • **What can I do as an individual member to ensure that I stay within the guidelines of**  
918 **Tradition Six?**

919 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

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

- 931 • **How do humility, integrity, faith, harmony, and anonymity apply to the Sixth Tradition?**
- 932 • **As groups, how do we practice all of these principles?**

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

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

938 • **What is reflected through our message?**

939 • **Why is it important that we not confuse our literature with that of other organizations?**

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

946 • **How is faith defined in the Sixth Tradition?**

947 • **How can we practice faith in this Tradition?**

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

953 • **What can we do to ensure harmony with outside organizations?**

954 • **Who is responsible for creating that harmony?**

955 • **What can we do as groups to improve our relations with outside entities?**

956 Our identity as a Fellowship is founded in anonymity and selfless service, carrying the  
957 message one addict to another. The relationships we have with outside organizations are based on the  
958 personalities of our leaders; our groups themselves are responsible for their cooperation with other  
959 organizations, making those contacts stronger and more effective.

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

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

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

## 972 **TRADITION SEVEN**

973       **“Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”** The  
974 Seventh Tradition adds further clarity to our group’s dealings with the public. Tradition Six cautioned  
975 us against funding other organizations, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from  
976 our primary purpose. Tradition Seven encourages us to decline funding from other organizations for  
977 the same reason: to maintain our group’s focus on its primary purpose. By paying our own expenses,  
978 we remain free to carry our own message.

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

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

987       Other meetings – for instance, many in institutions – are started by nonmember professionals  
988 who’ve become acquainted with the Narcotics Anonymous program. Wanting to provide their clients

989 with access to what NA has to offer, these professionals set a time, find a room, buy some literature,  
990 give a group booklet to the addicts who've gathered, and help them start a meeting. After some  
991 exposure to the principles underlying the NA program, these recovering addicts begin taking  
992 responsibility for their meetings themselves.

993           How a meeting is begun is not nearly so important as how it grows. Our experience is that,  
994 once a meeting is established, it gathers momentum. The meeting begins attracting a group of addicts  
995 who attend on a fairly consistent basis. These addicts share their experiences with one another and  
996 help each other better understand NA's principles of recovery. At this point, the meeting has become  
997 more than just an event; an NA group evolved from the meeting, complete with members committed  
998 to supporting one another. The group as a whole is ready to take full responsibility for its obligations.

- 999           • **Why doesn't it matter how a group is started? Or who starts the group even?**  
1000           • **When do the members begin to take some responsibility for the group themselves?**  
1001           **And what does these responsibilities include?**

1002           Many of us think of the Seventh Tradition as the money tradition. While we have come to  
1003 associate this tradition of self-support with the funds we contribute, the spirit of the Seventh Tradition  
1004 goes much farther than that. Whatever a group needs to fulfill its primary purpose should be provided  
1005 by the group itself.

1006           The question then is, what does a group need? First and foremost, it needs a message to carry-  
1007 and that, it already has.. In the course of its evolution, the group has attracted members who've proven  
1008 to one another that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new  
1009 way to live. Without that message, the group has no reason to exist; with it, an NA group needs little  
1010 more. Beyond that, the needs of the group are simple. Groups need to rent meeting places where their  
1011 members can gather and where newcomers can find them. Most groups find it important to buy NA  
1012 literature, which they make available at their meetings. The expenses associated with these things may  
1013 be substantial, yet most groups can meet such expenses by passing the hat.

- 1014           • **As members, how do we support our Seventh Tradition?**



1015 • **Why isn't our support limited to just the dollars we put in the basket? Explain...**

1016 • **Who is responsible for supporting Narcotics Anonymous? Explain...**

1017       After paying their basic expenses, most groups contribute to the NA Service Boards and  
1018 Committees that serve them. Phonelines, Meeting lists, NA literature, H&I panels, and Public  
1019 Information presentations all benefit the group. That's why service contributions are just as surely a  
1020 part of a group's self-support obligation as the rent for its meeting room. Like the groups, NA Service  
1021 Boards and Committees decline contributions from sources outside the Fellowship. Unlike the groups,  
1022 however, our service boards and committees are not themselves fully self-supporting. They have been  
1023 created to help the groups fulfill their primary purpose more effectively, and they depend on group  
1024 contributions for the money they need to do their work.

1025 • **Who's responsibility is it to support our service boards and committees? Why?**

1026 • **Who holds the responsibility for making sure that we fulfill our primary purpose?**

1027 • **Why do the NA Service Boards and Committees decline outside contributions?**

1028 • **Why is it important is it that we pass along our excess monies up through our service  
1029 structure?**

1030       To fulfill its purpose, the group also needs some things that don't cost a penny. A group needs  
1031 someone to open its meeting room, set up the chairs, and prepare the literature table. In some groups, a  
1032 member offers to prepare refreshments, helping establish a hospitable environment for the newcomer.  
1033 Most importantly, a group needs the consistent commitment of its members to show up and take part  
1034 in its meetings. Upon that commitment rests the group's stability; without it, no group can survive  
1035 long. Just as our group's survival depends on its members, so does the survival of our service boards  
1036 and committees. It's through our members support that our recovery message is carried.

1037 • **What can I do to support our Seventh Tradition in my group, service board or committees?**

1038 • **What does self-support mean to me?**

1039 • **Why is it important for members to consistently show up at meetings?**

1040 As simple as a group's needs are, a group's decision to become fully self supporting does not  
1041 usually require the commitment of extensive amounts of its member's money, time, or other resources.  
1042 If a group is having problems sustaining itself, it may want to ask itself some questions during a group  
1043 inventory:

- 1044 • **What is our primary purpose, and how do we fulfill it?**
- 1045 • **Are our service committees doing everything that they can to fulfill our primary purpose?**
- 1046 • **What does our group need to fulfill its primary purpose?**
- 1047 • **How have we confused our wants with our needs?**

1048 When a group's sense of its needs have become unreasonable, the simplicity of the Fifth  
1049 Tradition can help deflate those needs to their proper size.

- 1050 • **What can a group do if it is still unable to pay its own way even after examining its**  
1051 **understanding of the Fifth Tradition?**
- 1052 • **Tradition Seven tells our groups that they should not seek outside contributions, but what**  
1053 **considerations keep us from seeking money outside the NA Fellowship?**

1054 First, the group will want to consider its identity as a part of the Fellowship of Narcotics  
1055 Anonymous. Recovery in NA is very different in a number of ways from our using. When we were  
1056 using, many of us took whatever we could from whomever we could as often as we could. Our group's  
1057 decision to become fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions, reflects the new way our  
1058 members are living in recovery. Rather than taking what we want or need from others, we are paying  
1059 our own way.

1060 The group will also want to examine its identity as a group. When we were using, most of us  
1061 looked out for ourselves and ourselves alone, not giving any thought for one another's welfare. An NA  
1062 recovery group, on the other hand, is founded on its members' commitment to one another. Many of  
1063 us have tried to find a way of making it on our own, but without success. We've found we need one  
1064 another to survive and to grow. The NA group is both the expression and fulfillment of that need we

1065 have for one another's support. An NA group reinforces the solidarity of its members and the  
1066 foundation of their continued recovery by declining outside contributions.

- 1067 • **Why is it so important that a group remain committed to being fully self-supporting?**
- 1068 • **How does a group draw strength from its members?**
- 1069 • **How is our foundation reinforced through our self-supporting efforts?**
- 1070 • **What would happen to a group if its' members acted in the same selfish ways they did in**  
1071 **active addiction?**

1072 "Alright," we say, "our group has made a commitment to become self-supporting. But what if  
1073 the money we collect from passing the hat still isn't sufficient to meet our needs? What if we sold  
1074 some T-shirts or jewelry to raise some cash or held a dinner and asked for a donation at the door?  
1075 Perhaps the energy our members put into such activities could be turned into money we need to pay  
1076 our bills."

1077 On the face of it, there doesn't seem to be any contradiction between the Seventh Tradition  
1078 and these kinds of money-raising activities. Before engaging in such activities, however, the group  
1079 might want to ask itself why it wants these funds?

1080 We might also ask ourselves whether such activities, intended to raise money to help our  
1081 group carry the message, might end up diverting us from carrying the message. Money-raising  
1082 activities usually take a good bit of time to manage, time that might be better spent in fulfilling our  
1083 primary purpose more directly. If fundraising activities are successful, bringing in more money than  
1084 the group needs to meet its obligations, controversy over control of that money may well arise,  
1085 distracting the group from its primary purpose. A group may also want to consider whether the  
1086 atmosphere created by selling goods and services at its meetings might detract from the free, open  
1087 atmosphere so conducive to recovery.

- 1088 • **What should a group do to meet its obligations?**
- 1089 • **If passing the hat doesn't work, what alternatives does a group have?**
- 1090 • **What problems could arise should a group sell goods or services at its meetings?**

- 1091 • **How do you know when these money- making activities are distracting the group from its**  
1092 **primary purpose?**

1093 By and large, our groups have found that the simplest, straightest path to full self-support is  
1094 through the voluntary contributions of their own members. For this reason, we discourage groups from  
1095 engaging in fundraising activities. If a group is unable to provide for its own needs from the  
1096 contributions of its members, perhaps group members will want to consider increasing their  
1097 contributions.

1098 In the same breath as we speak of this, however, we need also recall our fellowship's Third  
1099 Tradition, which affirms that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Our  
1100 membership, whether we are speaking of membership in NA as a whole or group membership, does  
1101 not depend on the amount of money we give; indeed, we aren't required to give any amount at all in  
1102 order to consider ourselves NA members.

- 1103 • **What is the importance of our own contributions?**  
1104 • **What part does anonymity play in the Seventh Tradition?**  
1105 • **How can depending on funds other than our own contributions divert us from our primary**  
1106 **purpose?**

1107 If our group has carefully examined its expenses, trimmed them to match only what it needs to  
1108 fulfill its primary purpose, and still doesn't bring in enough money to pay its own way, the group's  
1109 members will be left with some questions only they can answer for themselves, individually:

- 1110 • **What do I get from the group?**  
1111 • **Does my personal recovery depend on its survival?**  
1112 • **Am I able to give more than I've already given and still meet my own financial**  
1113 **responsibilities?**

1114 At the same time as we consider our levels of personal contributions to the group, we should  
1115 remember that Tradition Seven speaks of the group as being self-supporting, not of one or two well-  
1116 off group members paying all the group's expenses or doing all its work. We each do well in giving

1117 our part toward the group’s self-support obligations without making the group overly dependent on  
1118 our individual contributions.

1119 • **What could happen if we allow members to contribute more than their share?**

1120 • **Who has the responsibility of our groups’ support?**

1121 • **Am I doing my part as a group member? Explain...**

1122 In the end, our individual decisions and group commitments are entirely up to us because we  
1123 are the ones who have to live with them. However, certain lines from our White Booklet, written in  
1124 reference to the Twelve Steps, seem to apply equally to the observance of the Seventh Tradition—  
1125 indeed, to all the traditions: “If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to  
1126 get it... these are the principles that made our recovery possible.” If we want what the group has to  
1127 offer us individually, and if our group wants to reap the benefits associated with self-support, we will  
1128 practice the principles that make those things possible.

1129 **Applying spiritual principles**

1130 Our Twelve Traditions describe those specific things that have been found to help our groups  
1131 remain strong, lively, and free. Underlying the specifics of our traditions, however, are dozens of  
1132 spirituals principles, any one of which could be applied to almost any the Twelve Traditions. This  
1133 broad field of principles is the ground upon which the traditions have grown. The more we cultivate  
1134 this ground, the stronger our understanding and application of each of the traditions themselves will  
1135 be. Some of the principles that will strengthen our understanding and application of the Seventh  
1136 Tradition are **gratitude, responsibility, faith, integrity, anonymity, and freedom.**

1137 • **How does the group gain strength by being fully self-supporting?**

1138 • **What spiritual principles are involved and how do they apply? Explain...**

1139 The gratitude we speak of in regard to Tradition Seven is like the collective sense of direction  
1140 the Second Tradition talks about; it is the gratitude of the NA group. When NA members gather to  
1141 share their recovery, they generate a sense of gratitude among themselves. They are grateful the group

1142 exists and want it to continue to be there for them and for the members yet to come. The gratitude of  
1143 the group speaks, in part, through the group's collective commitment to support itself.

1144 • **What is my understanding of gratitude in the Seventh Tradition?**

1145 • **How do I show my gratitude for the group?**

1146         The group's decision to become fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions, reflects  
1147 the group's sense of responsibility for itself. In recovery, we discard the illusion that the rest of the  
1148 world is responsible to take care of us; rather, we take due pride in caring for ourselves. Individually,  
1149 we demonstrate our newfound maturity by accepting the weight of our own burdens; collectively, we  
1150 demonstrate our maturity by accepting responsibility for our group, neither seeking nor accepting  
1151 outside contributions.

1152         The burden of responsibility, however, may seem unbearable without an appreciation for the  
1153 simplicity of the group's needs. The commitment to become self-supporting is not a commitment to  
1154 raise vast sums of money to fulfill sweeping programs. Rather, the group determines it will muster the  
1155 few basic resources it needs to fulfill its simple primary purpose: to carry the message to the still-  
1156 suffering addict. The ideal of simplicity, when applied to Tradition Seven, helps our groups avoid the  
1157 heated conflicts that often arise over the control of great resources. Problems of money, property, and  
1158 prestige need not divert our groups from their primary purpose when simplicity of that purpose and of  
1159 our needs is kept squarely in focus.

1160 • **How do I accept responsibility in Tradition Seven?**

1161 • **How important is simplicity to this tradition?**

1162 • **As a group, how do we except and achieve our responsibilities?**

1163         Simplicity walks hand and hand with our faith in a Higher Power. So long as we take our  
1164 direction from that Power, our needs are met. The decision to decline outside contributions by meeting  
1165 the group's needs from the group's own resources is based firmly in faith. So long as our group  
1166 remains devoted to fulfilling its primary purpose, its needs are met.

1167 • **How do we demonstrated faith in our Higher Power by practicing the Seventh Tradition?**

1168 • **Why is it important that we keep it simple?**

1169 As members of an NA group, we have made a commitment to support one another in our  
1170 recovery. Our group's commitment to become fully self-supporting reflects the group's integrity and  
1171 faithfulness to its fundamental identity. We support each other in recovery and, together, we fulfill our  
1172 collective responsibilities as members of a self-supporting group.

1173 • **How is integrity applied to the Seventh Tradition?**

1174 • **How important is commitment to this tradition?**

1175 The anonymity we exercise in accepting our group responsibilities reflects our integrity. The  
1176 anonymity of the Seventh Tradition means more than just contributing anonymously, without thought  
1177 of recognition, though of course it does involve that. Anonymity in the context of Tradition Seven also  
1178 means that all the contributions of a group's members are important. Money put in the basket, time put  
1179 into setting up the meeting room, energy put into making newcomers welcome-all are part of the  
1180 responsibility of the group, and all are equally important contributions to the self-supporting NA  
1181 program.

1182 • **What does anonymity mean to me in the context of the Seventh Tradition?**

1183 • **How can I practice anonymity in Tradition Seven?**

1184 Our anonymity, our integrity, our faith, our sense of simplicity, our acceptance of  
1185 responsibility, our gratitude-together, all these things spell freedom. By encouraging our group to pay  
1186 its own way, the Seventh Tradition gives our group freedom to share its recovery as it sees fit, not  
1187 obligated to outside contributors. Further, it gives our group the freedom that comes from inner  
1188 strength, the strength that develops through applying spiritual principles. By making the decision to  
1189 become fully self-supporting, our NA group assures that it will always have the resources it needs to  
1190 survive and continue fulfilling its primary purpose.

1191 • **Define freedom as it is related to being fully self-supporting?**

1192 • **How does my freedom come from being self-supporting?**

1193 **TRADITION EIGHT**

1194 **"Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may**  
1195 **employ special workers."**

1196       Narcotics Anonymous offers a distinctly non-professional approach to the disease of  
1197 addiction. We have no hospitals, no treatment centers, no outpatient clinics, none of the facilities  
1198 associated with a professional enterprise. We do not diagnose anyone's condition or track the progress  
1199 of our patients—in fact, we have no patients, only members. Our groups do not provide professional  
1200 therapeutic, medical, legal, or psychiatric services. We are simply a Fellowship of recovering addicts  
1201 who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

- 1202 • **Define professionals.**
- 1203 • **What is the difference between a non-professional approach and a professional approach?**
- 1204 • **Define special workers.**
- 1205 • **What is the difference between professionals and special workers?**

1206       In discussing the Sixth Tradition, we considered the sufficiency of our message. Narcotics  
1207 Anonymous groups need not rely on outside enterprises in order to effectively offer recovery from  
1208 addiction. In the same way, Tradition Eight reminds us that our members need no professional  
1209 credentials to be effective in carrying the NA message. The heart of the NA way of recovery from  
1210 addiction is one addict helping another. We have no certified NA counselors; our varied experience in  
1211 recovery from drug addiction is all the credentials we need. The firsthand exposure each of us has in  
1212 recovery from addiction is more than sufficient to qualify us to carry the message to other addicts.

1213       This is not to say that a member of Narcotics Anonymous should never take a job as a  
1214 professional therapist of one sort or another. It is only to say that, at an NA meeting, a member's  
1215 vocation is irrelevant. The therapeutic value in the message we share with one another lies in our  
1216 personal experience in recovery, not in our credentials, our training, or our professional status.

- 1217 • **What is the heart of the NA way?**



- 1218 • **What is the message we share as members?**
- 1219 • **Should our professional status have any bearing on our ability to carry the message of**
- 1220 **recovery?**
- 1221 • **As a professional and a NA member, how do I not treat a member as a client?**
- 1222 • **Define therapeutic value in Narcotics Anonymous.**

1223 We don't sell recovery; we share it freely with others in a spirit of love and gratitude.

1224 However, Narcotics Anonymous groups, service boards and committees may require professional help

1225 in fulfilling their responsibilities. Tradition Eight makes a distinction between "selling our recovery"

1226 and paying people to help us do our service work. If one of our committees requires professional

1227 assistance in a service task, it's alright, for example, to contract the help of a lawyer or an accountant.

1228 If we need to employ someone to help us on a regular basis, a "special worker" we may give them a

1229 paycheck in return for the services they provide us. Special workers who are also NA members are not

1230 selling their recovery. They are simply providing professional service support we would otherwise

1231 have to hire non-addicts to provide.

- 1232 • **What are some examples of a special worker?**
- 1233 • **When is it proper for us to hire professionals to help us? List possible examples.**
- 1234 • **Who determines when it is necessary to hire outside workers? List possible examples.**

1235 **Applying spiritual principles**

1236 Tradition Eight is one of the simplest and most straightforward of the Twelve Traditions.

1237 Likewise, the principles underlying the Eighth Tradition are eminently practical ones: humility,

1238 prudence, anonymity, and integrity.

1239 An NA group exercises humility when it does not pretend to be anything more or less than it

1240 is. We do not claim to be professionals or experts in anything. We are not physicians, or therapists; we

1241 are recovering addicts. All we offer is our collective practical experience in getting clean and learning

1242 to live clean. The value of our program comes from the identification and trust that exist between one

1243 addict and another.

- 1244 • **Define humility.**
- 1245 • **How are we practicing humility in the context of Tradition Eight?**
- 1246 • **What do we have to offer another addict seeking recovery?**
- 1247 • **Where does the value of our program come from?**

1248           We further exercise humility when we recognize that sometimes we need professionals to help  
1249 us fulfill our services. We place great emphasis on the therapeutic value of one addict helping another,  
1250 sometimes to the extent that we are reluctant to hire professional assistance when we need it. But some  
1251 NA services require too much time or expertise for our members to fulfill on a strictly volunteer basis.  
1252 We mustn't allow our pride to prevent our Fellowship from hiring the help it needs to support its  
1253 services.

- 1254 • **In what other way can we practice humility?**
- 1255 • **Should pride ever be a factor in our decision making process?**
- 1256 • **How does an addict determine when their volunteer status is interfering with their recovery?**
- 1257 • **What are some reasons for seeking professional assistance?**

1258           Neither should we hire special workers for jobs we can do for ourselves. We must exercise  
1259 prudence in employing professional assistance for our services. Most NA service responsibilities do  
1260 not require special expertise or large consistent commitments of time. Our members are perfectly  
1261 capable of fulfilling such responsibilities on a volunteer basis. By exercising prudence, we can  
1262 distinguish between those we can fulfill voluntarily.

- 1263 • **Define prudence as it applies to the Eighth Tradition?**
- 1264 • **How do we exercise prudence in fulfilling our responsibilities?**
- 1265 • **Who holds the responsibility for the welfare of NA as a whole?**
- 1266 • **In what ways can we help fulfil service responsibilities?**

1267           Tradition Eight reminds our groups of the value of anonymity. Professionals are people with  
1268 certain specialized skills, often recognized by the credentials given them by a certifying panel. An NA

1269 group has no such recognized experts. All group members are experts in their own recovery, fully  
1270 qualified to share that recovery with another addict.

1271 • **As members of NA, what qualifies us to share our experience, strength, and hope?**

1272 • **Define anonymity as it relates to Tradition Eight.**

1273 Finally, Tradition Eight supports the integrity of the NA group by helping it preserve what is  
1274 most important about its fundamental identity. What is Narcotics Anonymous, after all, but a  
1275 Fellowship of addicts freely sharing with one another the simple message of their own experience?  
1276 Tradition Eight is a firm and permanent commitment on the part of each NA group to steadfastly  
1277 maintain the feature of our program that is, indeed, of foremost value. By agreeing that Narcotics  
1278 Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, we reaffirm our belief that the therapeutic value  
1279 of one addict helping another is without parallel! This is the heart of our program; so long as that heart  
1280 beats strongly, our Fellowship and our recovery shall remain vital.

1281 • **Define integrity as it relates to the Eighth Tradition.**

1282 • **Why is practicing integrity so important to this Tradition?**

1283 • **Who holds the responsibility of the integrity of the Eighth Tradition?**

1284 • **What is the therapeutic value of one addict helping another addict?**

## 1285 **TRADITION NINE**

1286 **"NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees**  
1287 **directly responsible to those they serve."**

1288 In our White Booklet, we read that "NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and  
1289 women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly  
1290 to help each other stay clean." This is NA, as such-a simple fellowship using a nonprofessional,  
1291 addict-to addict approach to the disease of addiction. We are a fellowship, not a lobbying organization  
1292 or a medical service or a chain of treatment facilities. We are non-professional. We have no rules, no  
1293 fees, no governing bodies, and only one membership requirement: a desire to stop using. Our primary

1294 purpose is, quite simply, to carry the message. These are some of the traditional standards by which  
1295 our groups may guide themselves, and our ultimate guiding authority is a Higher Power as it finds  
1296 expression in the conscience of our members. Our groups work as well as they do because they keep it  
1297 simple, least anything get in the way of carrying our message as simply and directly as possible, one  
1298 addict to another.

1299 • **What is our fellowships only requirement? Explain.**

1300 • **Who is in control of Narcotics Anonymous?**

1301         Yet for all its emphasis on keeping things simple, Tradition Nine is not an excuse for dis-  
1302 organized service work; instead, it recognizes that our fellowship does require a certain degree of  
1303 organization to fulfill its primary purpose. Rather than recommend that NA groups themselves become  
1304 organized, the Ninth Tradition suggests that groups organize separate boards and committees to serve  
1305 their needs. Just as we are nonprofessional but may hire professionals to help us, so we are not  
1306 organized but may organize boards and committees to serve us. This arrangement ensures that NA, as  
1307 such, maintains its uncluttered, direct approach to recovery while assuring our ability to fulfill service  
1308 tasks requiring a certain amount of organization.

1309 • **What are service boards and committees?**

1310 • **What is the importance of forming service boards and committees to serve the group?**

1311 • **When is it okay for us to be organized?**

1312 • **Should our organization ever interfere with our primary purpose and why?**

1313         Okay, so we may create service boards or committees. Now we must ask ourselves, why  
1314 would we want to create such things? What are the needs these boards and committees would fulfill?  
1315 To answer this question, let's look at how an NA group evolves, as we did when considering the  
1316 Seventh Tradition.

1317         In the beginning, an area's first NA group only needs to gather its members together so they  
1318 can help one another stay clean and carry their message to other addicts. As the group grows, it begins  
1319 taking care of a variety of business related to its meetings, trying to ensure that the message is carried

1320 as effectively as possible. To maintain the focus of its recovery meetings, the group usually conducts  
1321 its business meeting separately, keeping NA, as such, as simple as possible.

1322         As the group grows even larger, it often sprouts new groups. To maintain some of the unity  
1323 and camaraderie that existed when there was only one group in the area, these groups elect  
1324 representatives who meet periodically. These representatives share information with one another about  
1325 how their individual groups are doing and help one another find solutions to problems one group or  
1326 another may be having. From time to time, they may even organize a joint recovery meeting or social  
1327 activity, gathering the entire NA community together.

- 1328 • **What is a GSR?**
- 1329 • **How does the GSR serve its group?**
- 1330 • **How is an area service committee formed? Explain.**
- 1331 • **What is an area subcommittee? Give Examples.**
- 1332 • **What are the needs these service boards and committees fulfill?**

1333         Sooner or later, the groups realize the potential they have in this committee of representatives.  
1334 Through this committee, the groups can combine their guidance and resources so that each of them  
1335 can function more effectively and all, together, can carry the message farther. The groups may ask  
1336 their committee to buy bulk supplies of literature, making it easier for each group to procure NA books  
1337 and pamphlets. The groups might ask their committee to compile a directory for distribution at  
1338 meetings throughout the area, making it easier for addicts to find out where NA meetings are being  
1339 held. The groups may ask that public information, hospitals and institutions, and Phone line programs  
1340 are set up, letting still-suffering addicts who might not hear of NA by word of mouth know of the  
1341 fellowship's existence and increasing general awareness of Narcotics Anonymous. The point is, the  
1342 development of these services is based squarely on the groups' needs. We create these boards and  
1343 committees to serve us in fulfilling those needs.

- 1344 • **Do the committees and service boards serve the groups or do the groups serve them? Give**  
1345 **examples.**

- 1346 • **What part does unity play in the area committee? Give examples.**  
1347 • **Where should the support for our service boards and committees come from and why should**  
1348 **it be given?**

1349 As our groups grow, so does our needs from our area grow. Explain.

1350 First, the groups define their needs; then, they create the boards and committees which will serve  
1351 them. Once created, how do we assure that our service boards and committees will remain directly  
1352 responsible to those they serve? We do this, first and foremost, through consistent communication.  
1353 Through their representatives, groups communicate with the boards and committees serving them. The  
1354 groups provide regular information about their condition and their activities. They communicate their  
1355 concerns, their needs, their ideas, and their wishes. This information helps our boards and committees  
1356 better understand and serve the needs of the groups.

- 1357 • **What subcommittee is created at the area level to assure that our service boards and**  
1358 **committees remain directly responsible to the groups they serve?**  
1359 • **How do we hold our representatives accountable to the groups they serve?**  
1360 • **Why is communication so important? Explain.**  
1361 • **How does this apply to our primary purpose?**  
1362 • **What kind of information should the groups communicate to these boards and committees?**  
1363 **Be specific.**

1364 Communication is a two-way street. Groups share information and guidance with the boards  
1365 and committees serving them. Then these boards and committees report back to the groups to which  
1366 they are responsible, describing their operation, discussions, and plans. Responsible service boards  
1367 and committees consult the groups in matters directly affecting them and seek direction from the  
1368 groups in matters not already covered by existing policy. By maintaining regular two-way  
1369 communication between NA groups and the boards and committees serving them, we create an  
1370 atmosphere of responsibility that serve our fellowship and its primary purpose well.

- 1371 • **Communication is a two-way street. Explain.**

1372 • **What is the difference between responsible service boards and committees and irresponsible**  
1373 **service boards and committees? Give three examples of each.**

1374 • **What are policies generated to achieve?**

1375 **Applying spiritual principles**

1376 Because the Ninth Tradition empowers the group to establish a service structure-not a simple  
1377 thing-many of us think of Tradition Nine as being very complex. In reality, the spiritual principles  
1378 underlying this tradition are very simple. The Ninth Tradition focuses, first, not on the relationship  
1379 between groups and service committees but on NA, as such. We are a fellowship of recovering addicts  
1380 who help one another stay clean, nothing more.

1381 Whenever possible, organized service work should be kept distinct from the groups so that  
1382 they can remain free to simply and directly fulfill our primary purpose, addict to addict. The boards  
1383 and committees we do organize, we organize on the basis of need only, using the simplest guidelines  
1384 possible. We organize them solely to serve us, not to establish a complex governing bureaucracy. The  
1385 Ninth Tradition is far from complicated; in fact, it speaks throughout of simplicity.

1386 • **What is the most important focus of Tradition Nine? Explain.**

1387 • **What does simplicity mean in reference to Tradition Nine? Give examples.**

1388 In the same way, Tradition Nine speaks of anonymity. When the Ninth Tradition exhorts NA,  
1389 as such, never to become organized, it is telling us that we ought not create a governing hierarchy, a  
1390 top-down bureaucracy dictating to our groups and members. As we noted in the Second Tradition, our  
1391 leaders are not governors but servants taking their directions from the collective conscience of those  
1392 they serve. Our primary purpose, not the personalities of our trusted servants, is what defines NA, as  
1393 such. To reinforce the anonymity of tradition Nine, our groups, service boards, and committees  
1394 practice various systems of rotating leadership so that no one personality ever dominates.

1395 • **What does NA, as such mean to me?**

1396 • **Why should NA as such, not become organized?**

1397 • **Why should we rotate our leaders periodically?**

1398 • **How do we apply anonymity in Tradition Nine? Explain.**

1399           Another principle implicit in the Ninth Tradition is the principle of humility. Each group on its  
1400 own is somewhat limited in its ability to fulfill its primary purpose; it has only so many members, so  
1401 much time, and so many dollars to use in carrying the message by itself. However, when a number of  
1402 groups combine their resources by joining together to form a service board or committee, they enhance  
1403 their ability to fulfill their primary purpose. Together, they become able to do what they could not do  
1404 alone.

1405           The principle of humility also applies to the boards and committees spoken of in our Ninth  
1406 Tradition. These service boards and committees are established to serve only, not to govern. They are  
1407 directly responsible to the groups and are always subject to the explicit direction of the groups.  
1408 Although our service boards and committees may do much more to help our groups fulfill their  
1409 primary purpose, it is in the groups where NA, as such, come to focus, not in the boards and  
1410 committees that they serve.

1411 • **What are the limitations that the group faces in fulfilling its primary purpose?**

1412 • **Define humility as it applies to the group as well as its boards and committees?**

1413           Prudence is one of the guiding principles behind the Ninth Tradition relationship between the  
1414 groups and the boards and committees that serve them. Groups are responsible to consider their needs  
1415 carefully, planning prudently before they create boards and committees. There is nothing that will  
1416 complicate the simplicity of NA, as such, more than a needlessly elaborate array of committees,  
1417 boards, and subcommittees.

1418 • **Define the principle of prudence.**

1419 • **How do we apply this principle to the Ninth Tradition?**

1420           The group's responsibility does not end with the establishment of a board or committee to  
1421 fulfill their service needs; in fact, that is only the beginning. As long as the committee remains active,  
1422 the groups should maintain familiarity with its affairs. The groups should also provide continuing



1423 guidance to the committee. Our boards and committees cannot be held accountable to the groups they  
1424 serve unless the groups play a responsible role in their service relationship.

- 1425 • **Who has the responsibility of the committees? Explain.**
- 1426 • **To what extent should a group be supportive to a committee it has created? Give examples.**

1427       Finally, the Ninth Tradition speaks of fidelity. Narcotics anonymous groups join together,  
1428 combining their resources to create service boards and committees that will help them better fulfill  
1429 their primary purpose. Those boards and committees are not called to govern Narcotics Anonymous;  
1430 they are called, rather, to faithfully execute the trust given them by the groups they serve. With a  
1431 minimum of organization, our service boards and committees perform task on behalf of the groups,  
1432 helping our groups remain free to do what they do best, simply and directly. Our fidelity to the Ninth  
1433 Tradition assures that the simple, spontaneous atmosphere of recovery shared one addict to another in  
1434 the NA group is never organized, legislated, or regulated out of existence.

- 1435 • **When we speak of fidelity, as it pertains to Tradition Nine what do we mean?**
- 1436 • **What are the three things that we never want to happen to our NA groups?**
- 1437 • **How do we make sure that our program remains simple and humble?**

#### 1438 **TRADITION TEN**

1439 "Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the NA name ought never be  
1440 drawn into public controversy."

1441 Narcotics Anonymous is a society of recovering addicts who help one another stay clean by  
1442 applying certain simple spiritual principles. Our primary purpose, as groups and as a  
1443 fellowship, is to offer that same help to any addict seeking recovery. Aside from that, NA has  
1444 no opinions whatsoever. By refusing to take sides on other issues, we avoid becoming  
1445 embroiled in public controversies that could distract us from our primary purpose. This is the  
1446 message of our Tenth Tradition.

- 1447 • **What spiritual principles do we apply in this Tradition?**

- 1448 • **What is the primary purpose in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 1449 • **Why does NA have no opinion on outside issues? Explain.**
- 1450 • **What is public controversy? Give examples.**
- 1451 • **Elaborate on the message of Tradition Ten.**

1452 To most of us, it probably seems obvious that Narcotics Anonymous, as a fellowship, has no  
1453 opinion on the pressing world issues of our day. Most of these issues have little to do with  
1454 either addiction or recovery. But there are a great number of addiction related issues that  
1455 others might expect a worldwide society of recovering drug addicts to take positions on.  
1456 "What is NA's opinion," we are sometimes asked, "on the addiction treatment industry, other  
1457 twelve step fellowships, the legalization of drugs, addiction related illnesses, and all the rest?"  
1458 Our answer, according to Tradition Ten, is that our groups and our fellowship take no  
1459 position, pro or con, on any issues except the NA program itself. We maintain neutrality on  
1460 such issues so that we can maintain our focus on what we do best: sharing recovery from one  
1461 addict to another.

- 1462 • **Why doesn't NA express an opinion on addiction related issues?**
- 1463 • **What do we have to lose by not remaining neutral?**
- 1464 • **What benefits do we gain by maintaining neutrality?**
- 1465 • **What is our position on issues outside the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 1466 • **Should we ever express our opinion on outside issues? Explain.**
- 1467 • **How do outside entities get information on Narcotics Anonymous?**

1468 However, even in explaining our own program in public, we may find ourselves treading on  
1469 controversial ground. NA's views on total abstinence, on the possibility of recovering in  
1470 society without long-term institutionalization, on the disease concept of addiction, even our

1471 broad views on spirituality are not met with universal acceptance. Others who deal with  
1472 addiction and recovery may view these matters very differently than we do. We cannot deny  
1473 those aspects of our program that others take exception to. We can, however, take care to  
1474 explain our program in such a way as not to invite controversy deliberately. "We do not  
1475 suggest that anyone adopt our views, nor do we oppose those with different views," we can  
1476 explain. "We simply want you to know what the Narcotics Anonymous program is like." So  
1477 long as we focus, as groups and as a fellowship, on our recovery experience rather than our  
1478 opinions of why or how NA works, we will stay as far as possible from public controversy.

- 1479 • **Should I ever represent NA alone?**
- 1480 • **What views does NA have about getting clean?**
- 1481 • **Should we ever have to defend our position as a fellowship? Explain.**
- 1482 • **How can we explain NA without creating controversy?**

1483 Tradition Ten restricts NA, as a fellowship, from stating opinions on outside issues. However,  
1484 it places no such restriction on the individual member. In Narcotics Anonymous, we believe  
1485 strongly in personal freedom. Addicts who have a desire to stop using can become members  
1486 of NA simply by expressing that desire. We have no dues or fees, no pledges to sign, no  
1487 promises to make to anyone, ever. Through a spiritual program, we encourage our members to  
1488 develop their own understanding of a Higher Power. Even our leaders are but trusted servants,  
1489 with no power to tell individual members what to do, think, or say. NA members are  
1490 encouraged to think for themselves, to develop their own opinions, and to express those  
1491 opinions as they see fit.

1492 The only caution Tradition Ten offers individual NA members is that, when speaking  
1493 publicly, we think through what we're going to say before we say it. In certain situations,

1494 anything an NA member says will be taken as NA's opinion, even when the situation itself has  
1495 nothing to do with Narcotics Anonymous and the member clearly states that the views  
1496 expressed are strictly personal. It is not our fault if others misinterpret what we say as  
1497 individuals; this does not, make the complications arising from such misinterpretations any  
1498 less serious for NA. We may be able to avoid such complications before they arise simply by  
1499 thinking carefully before we speak in public.

- 1500 • **What 3 things are not required to become a member of NA?**
- 1501 • **How do we, as individuals, keep misinterpretations of NA from happening?**
- 1502 • **Are we restricted as individual NA members? Explain.**
- 1503 • **How does Spirituality come into play in Tradition Ten?**
- 1504 • **How do we know if it's a NA opinion or an individual opinion? Explain.**
- 1505 • **What are our responsibilities as member to NA as a whole? Explain.**
- 1506 • **What is public opinion? Describe.**
- 1507 • **In what ways does PI work related to the Tenth Tradition.**

1508 But what about speaking in a recovery gathering? Does the Tenth Tradition tell us that, as  
1509 individual recovering addicts, we must not talk in NA meetings about the challenges we face?

1510 No, it does not. While a particular problem may be an outside issue, its effect on our recovery  
1511 is not; everything affecting a recovering addict's life is material for sharing. If a problem we  
1512 are having impacts our ability to stay clean and grow spiritually, it's not an outside issue

- 1513 • **What is the difference between a recovery gathering and a NA meeting? Explain.**
- 1514 • **How do we share outside issues that affect our recovery, so we can get a solution?**
- 1515 **Give examples.**

1516 • **What is the difference with outside issues and our personal experiences; can we**  
1517 **share both of these in a NA meeting?**

1518 • **What is freedom in Narcotics Anonymous? Explain.**

1519 • **What precautions should NA members take in speaking at NA functions?**  
1520 **Explain.**

1521 Many things can put us off balance and challenge our recovery. We often discuss such  
1522 challenges with one another at our meetings, seeking to ease our personal burdens by sharing  
1523 them with our fellow NA members. We ask others to share how they have applied the  
1524 principles of the program in similar circumstances, recovering their balance and strengthening  
1525 their recovery. We need no one's permission to talk about such things in our meetings.

1526 But, for all that, we all know that controversial personal opinions can distract our meetings  
1527 from their primary purpose. If everything is recovery material, yet we want to help our  
1528 meetings retain their focus on recovery, how do we decide what to share? We can ask  
1529 ourselves some questions:

1530 • **How do I really know if what I share is recovery material? Give examples.**

1531 • **Am I sharing from my experience, or am I expounding an opinion?**

1532 • **As an individual, am I dwelling in the problem or seeking the solution?**

1533 • **Do I share to draw the group together or to force the group into separate camps?**  
1534 **Explain.**

1535 • **Do I make it clear that what I say, I say for myself, not for Narcotics anonymous?**

1536 • **Do I share about how I use the spiritual principles of NA in my recovery? Give**  
1537 **examples.**

1538 So long as we keep our common welfare and our primary purpose in focus, we will avoid the  
1539 kind of controversy that distracts us from recovery.

1540 • **What is our common welfare? Give examples.**

1541 • **What kinds of controversy can distract us from recovery? Give examples.**

1542

### 1543 **Applying spiritual principles**

1544 Foremost among the principles our groups and our fellowship apply in practicing Tradition

1545 Ten is the principle of unity. For all the diversity of individual opinion among our members,

1546 Narcotics Anonymous itself is united in having no opinion on any issues apart from its own

1547 program. As a fellowship, we agree to take positions only on those ideals that have drawn us

1548 together, our principles of recovery, not on the many personal opinions that might divide us.

1549 • **How is the principle of unity expressed in the Tenth Tradition?**

1550 • **What can we do as individual members to ensure that the unity of NA continues?**

1551 The Tenth Tradition is an exercise in responsibility. As groups and as a fellowship, we are

1552 responsible to carry our message to the still-suffering addict. We are responsible to provide an

1553 atmosphere in which recovering addicts can share freely with one another. To do these things

1554 effectively, we must stay as free of the distractions of public controversy as possible. We

1555 absolutely can avoid any controversies, which might arise from groups or the fellowship

1556 taking positions on issues entirely outside the scope of our program.

1557 Individual NA members responsibly exercise the Tenth Tradition by personally guarding

1558 NA's neutrality whenever and whatever they speak. Publicly, we differentiate between our

1559 personal opinions and those of NA, avoiding the expression of any personal opinions at all in

1560 circumstances where the difference might not be recognized. In meetings, NA members make

1561 it clear that what we share is our own experience, not the position of Narcotics Anonymous,  
1562 providing as little opportunity as possible for misinterpretation. The way we speak as NA  
1563 members often affects how others view NA; therefore, as responsible members, we speak  
1564 carefully, guarding the neutrality that is so important to the welfare of us all.

- 1565 • **Is it important to make it clear that what we share is our own opinion? Why?**
- 1566 • **What is our responsibility as member, as groups, and as a fellowship in the Tenth**  
1567 **Tradition?**
- 1568 • **When sharing in a NA meeting or Public Gathering is it appropriate to use “we”**  
1569 **instead of “I”?**
- 1570 • **How do we fulfill our obligation to avoid controversy? Explain.**
- 1571 • **Why is it important we to stay free from distractions?**

1572 To fulfill Tradition Ten, our groups, service boards, and committees must exercise prudence  
1573 in their public contacts. Elements of our fellowship are constantly in touch with others in  
1574 society. Groups maintain contacts with their meeting facilities and those in their  
1575 neighborhood; H&I subcommittee, with facility administrators; Public Information workers,  
1576 with health professionals, charitable organizations, government agencies, and media. In all  
1577 our contacts with society, we must take care not to express any opinions on issues outside the  
1578 scope of our program. Such prudence will protect our credibility in the public eye on the only  
1579 issue that truly concerns Narcotics Anonymous: our program of recovery from addiction.

- 1580 • **What is prudence?**
- 1581 • **How do we exercise prudence in our public contact and why?**
- 1582 • **What is our only concern, in our dealing with the public?**
- 1583 • **How do we protect the credibility of NA as individuals and as a fellowship?**

1584 By practicing the Tenth Tradition, we demonstrate our belief in the value of anonymity. All of  
1585 us have our opinions. But when we speak as groups and as a fellowship, we do not take  
1586 positions on the opinions of individuals. What we have to share with the public is our  
1587 fellowship's message, not our personal opinion.

1588 Tradition Ten is supremely practical. The only issue upon which our fellowship is willing to  
1589 publicly stake its reputation is the NA program itself. Underlying the practicality of the Tenth  
1590 Tradition, however, can be found a fundamental spiritual principle, that of humility. Narcotics  
1591 Anonymous does not claim to have the answer to every trouble in the world. We do not even  
1592 claim that we necessarily have the only answer to addiction. When we share in public, as  
1593 groups or as a fellowship, we share only our message. We talk about what we do, neither  
1594 supporting nor opposing what anyone else does. We are what we are, and that's all that we  
1595 are: a society of recovering drug addicts sharing their recovery with one another and offering  
1596 the same to the addict who still suffers. We speak simply about our program, knowing that  
1597 our effectiveness will attract more goodwill than any amount of promotion. Our program has  
1598 worked for us and is available for others interested in recovery. If we can be of service, we  
1599 stand ready to help.

- 1600 • **Define anonymity?**
- 1601 • **Why is anonymity so important to the Tenth Tradition?**
- 1602 • **The welfare of Narcotics Anonymous is at stake, the public opinion should be**  
1603 **considered. Explain.**

1604 **TRADITION ELEVEN**

1605 "Our public relation policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always  
1606 maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film."



1607 The Eleventh Tradition is the cornerstone of NA's public relations policy. But Tradition  
1608 Eleven is only one of six traditions that address various aspects of our relations with the  
1609 public. The Third and Fifth Traditions talk about the primary purpose and ultimate target of  
1610 our public relation efforts. Tradition Six and Seven describe the nature of our relations with  
1611 other organizations, and the Tenth Tradition details our policy concerning public  
1612 pronouncement on issues outside the scope of our recovery program. Clearly, our traditions  
1613 are just as concerned with our public relations as they are with our internal relations.

1614 • **What makes attraction more important than promotion?**

1615 Most NA groups have some sort of contact with the public in their everyday affairs. But the  
1616 public relations spoken of in the Eleventh Tradition are more deliberate than our group's  
1617 routine encounters with those outside the fellowship. The existence of a public relations  
1618 "policy" implies the importance of a public relations "program" in carrying out our  
1619 fellowship's primary purpose. Public information work, done properly, is not promoted;  
1620 rather, it seeks to make NA attractive to those who might need us. As NA groups, service  
1621 boards, and committees, we deliberately and energetically cultivate good public relations, not  
1622 as an incidental result of our normal activity but as a way to better carry our message to  
1623 addicts. Narcotics Anonymous is not a secret society; Tradition Eleven speaks to personal  
1624 anonymity, not fellowship anonymity. The better known we are by the public, the more likely  
1625 it is that addicts seeking recovery-or their friends, relatives, co-workers will think of us and  
1626 know where to find us when they decide to seek help. One way to take part in NA's public  
1627 relations program is to become involved in the local Public Information Subcommittee.

1628 • **Why is Tradition Eleven the cornerstone of NA's public relation policy?**

1629 • **Is NA a secret society? Explain.**

- 1630 • **Why do we have the public information subcommittee?**
- 1631 • **How is public information promoted and what does it seek to do?**
- 1632 • **Who is responsible for its support?**
- 1633 • **Who does the Public Information Subcommittee address?**
- 1634 • **How do I get involved in the Public Information Subcommittee?**
- 1635 • **What other Traditions involve public relations? Explain.**

1636 The Eleventh Tradition tells us that, when we engage in public relations activity, we speak  
1637 simply and directly of what Narcotics Anonymous is and what we do. We are not to make  
1638 exaggerated claims about NA. Our public relations efforts should be as inviting and non-  
1639 promotional as our program itself, saying to addicts and society at large, and "If you want that  
1640 we have to offer, this is what we are and how we work. If we can be of service, please let us  
1641 know."

- 1642 • **Why should we not make exaggerated claims about NA?**
- 1643 • **List examples of exaggerated claims about NA.**
- 1644 • **What does our public relations program offer? Give examples.**
- 1645 • How important is it that we always represent who we are, what we do, and
- 1646 • how we do it?

1647 Some organizations use celebrity members as public spokespersons, hoping to enhance the  
1648 organization's credibility by tying it to the celebrity's status. This may be fine for other  
1649 organizations. But Tradition Eleven tells us in no uncertain terms that, in NA's public  
1650 relations efforts, we must never do this—not with celebrity members, not with any member. If  
1651 our fellowship used a celebrity member in a public announcement about NA and the celebrity  
1652 later relapsed or otherwise suffered a loss of prestige, what good would that do to our

1653 fellowship's credibility? The same could apply to any individual member put in the public  
1654 spotlight on NA's behalf. The credibility of NA's message can be greatly affected by NA's  
1655 messengers. In the public eye-including press, radio, film, and all other media-we need always  
1656 maintain personal anonymity.

1657 • **Why should we never use celebrities as spokespersons for Narcotics Anonymous?**

1658 • **What makes NA's message credible without using a celebrity? Explain.**

1659 • **Why shouldn't just any NA member be a spokesperson for public information?**

1660 • **Why is personal anonymity so important in public relations? Explain.**

1661 • **How do I maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films?**

1662 The same applies to other kinds of public information work. Public anonymity helps keep the  
1663 focus of our public relations on the NA message, not the PI workers involved. We never do PI  
1664 work alone because as a team-even a pair-better displays NA as a fellowship to the public,  
1665 while individuals tend to draw attention to themselves. Teams also tend to keep the  
1666 personalities of their members in check, the better to ensure that NA and not the individual  
1667 addict is what we present to the public. The true statement that "an addict alone is in bad  
1668 company" applies to our public relations efforts just as well as to our personal recovery.

1669 • **Why is it that we never do PI work alone?**

1670 • **What should our public information work always be focused on?**

1671 In most circumstances, though, personal anonymity is a purely personal decision. However  
1672 closely we may have guarded the secret of our addiction, most of those close to us probably  
1673 knew we were in trouble when we were using. Today it may be helpful to tell them about our  
1674 recovery and our membership in Narcotics Anonymous.

1675 Other circumstances may also warrant the disclosure of our NA membership. When a friend  
1676 tells us about the struggles another person is having with addiction, we may want to let that  
1677 friend know about Narcotics Anonymous and what it has done for us. When a co-worker has a  
1678 drug problem, we may want to share our experience with that person. None of us will want to  
1679 indiscriminately trumpet all the gory details of our addiction to everyone in town, nor will we  
1680 disclose our NA membership to everyone we meet. When we think we may be helpful to  
1681 someone, it may be appropriate to share a bit of our story and the recovery we've found in  
1682 Narcotics Anonymous.

- 1683 • **List several reasons why we don't disclose our NA membership to everyone. Give at**  
1684 **least four examples.**
- 1685 • **How do we share about NA without breaking our own anonymity?**
- 1686 • **When is it appropriate to disclose our NA membership?**
- 1687 • **Name some circumstances when anonymity becomes a personal decision.**
- 1688 • **Should we make it clear when this is our own experience with NA?**
- 1689 • **When I share my experience, strength, and hope is it okay to break someone else's**  
1690 **anonymity?**

1691 All our members play a part in our public relations, whether or not they're involved in public  
1692 information work. When individual addicts demonstrate recovery at work in their lives, they  
1693 become our strongest attraction, a living testament of NA's effectiveness. Seeing us now,  
1694 those who know what we once were like will spread the word to those they meet that NA  
1695 works. The further that message is carried, the more likely it is that addicts seeking recovery  
1696 will be attracted to the warm, loving support of our fellowship.

1697 By the same token, we must remember that, wherever we go, we always represent NA to  
1698 some degree. If we are seen acting poorly while we prominently display an NA logo on our T-  
1699 shirt, we carry a distinctly unattractive message about our fellowship to the public. What we  
1700 say and what we do reflects on our NA recovery and the NA Fellowship. As responsible NA  
1701 members, we want that reflection to be a source of attraction rather than a source of  
1702 embarrassment.

- 1703 • Can any recovering addict play a part in public information work? Give examples.
- 1704 • **The best public relations in Narcotics Anonymous is the recovering addict. Explain.**
- 1705 • **Give examples in which our behavior reflects on the NA fellowship, both in a positive**  
1706 **and a negative light.**
- 1707 •

#### 1708 **Applying spiritual principles**

1709 Tradition Eleven is an expression of our faith in the effectiveness of our program. As a  
1710 fellowship, our primary purpose is to carry the recovery message to the still-suffering addict.  
1711 To fulfill that primary purpose, we do not need a promotional public relations policy. To gain  
1712 public goodwill and attract addicts to our meetings, all we need to do is clearly and simply  
1713 describe the Narcotics Anonymous program. We need neither fanfare, overblown claims, nor  
1714 celebrity endorsements to build our public relations. We have faith that the effectiveness of  
1715 our fellowship, once made known, will speak for itself.

- 1716 • **What part does faith play in the Eleventh Tradition?**
- 1717 • **Do we have to sell our program of recovery? Explain.**

1718 The principle of service, critical to the application of our Eleventh Tradition, is not a passive  
1719 principle. To be of maximum service to the still-suffering addict, we must energetically seek

1720 to carry our message throughout our cities, towns, and villages. Our public relations policy is  
1721 based on attraction, to be sure, not promotion. But to attract the still-suffering addict to our  
1722 program, we must take vigorous steps to make our program widely known. The better and  
1723 broader our public relations, the better we will be able to serve.

- 1724 • **How can we use the spiritual principles of the program to attract new members?**
- 1725 • **Narcotics Anonymous is about attraction not promotion. Explain.**
- 1726 • **How can we vigorously make our program known?**
- 1727 • **How far reaching does NA extend in your city, state, country, and throughout the**  
1728 **world?**

1729 Each of us has our own life, our own words, and our own story, all adding dimension and  
1730 color to the message of our fellowship. But the message we carry to society is not the message  
1731 of how great we are as individuals. The primary purpose of our public relations efforts is to  
1732 tell the story of Narcotics Anonymous and what our program offers to the still-suffering  
1733 addict. Our practice of public anonymity is built on the spiritual foundation of all our  
1734 traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

- 1735 • **In your opinion, what is the story of NA?**
- 1736 • **The message of recovery is not about how great we are as individuals. Explain why.**
- 1737 • **Why is it important for us to always place principles before personalities as**  
1738 **individuals and as the fellowship? Give Examples.**

1739 TRADITION TWELVE

1740 **“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place**  
1741 **principles before personalities.”**

1742 In personal recovery, we seek to replace self-will with the guidance of a Higher Power in our  
1743 personal affairs. In the same way, the traditions describe a fellowship that takes its collective  
1744 guidance from spiritual principles rather than individual personalities. That kind of  
1745 selflessness is what the Twelfth Tradition means by the word “anonymity,” and it is the  
1746 spiritual foundation upon which Narcotics Anonymous is built. Tradition Twelve is all the  
1747 traditions rolled up in one, summarizing and reinforcing the message of the previous eleven.

1748 • **If the spiritual principles are the guiding force of the fellowship, what is our guiding**  
1749 **force as individuals?**

1750 • **What other Traditions are present in Tradition Twelve?**

1751 • **The Traditions describe a fellowship that takes its collective guidance from spiritual**  
1752 **principles rather than individual personalities. Explain.**

1753 • **What does the principle of anonymity mean to the fellowship and me?**

1754 • **Anonymity is essential in preserving the stability of our fellowship, making personal**  
1755 **recovery possible. Recovery is a delicate thing. It grows best in a stable, supportive**  
1756 **environment. Each of us and each of our groups play a part in maintaining that**  
1757 **stability. Our unity is so precious that, given a choice between fulfilling our own**  
1758 **wishes and preserving our fellowship’s common welfare, we put the best interests of**  
1759 **NA first. We do this not only out of enlightened self-interest but also out of our sense**  
1760 **of responsibility to our fellow addicts. The principle of NA unity comes before the**  
1761 **fulfillment of our personal wishes.**

1762 • **What are the member’s part as well as the group’s part in preserving the unity of**  
1763 **NA?**

1764 • **What is essential in preserving the stability of our fellowship?**

1765 • **How does anonymity assure stability?**

1766 • **How can I practice the principle of anonymity?**

1767 • **In what kind of atmosphere does our recovery grow best?**

1768 • **The welfare of Narcotics Anonymous should always come first. Why?**

1769 Anonymity is the primary principle underlying our tradition of membership. While we all  
1770 have our personal differences, NA's only membership requirement is what we have in  
1771 common, a desire to stop using. This simple principle draws the diverse personalities of those  
1772 who suffer from our disease together in a common fellowship of recovery.

1773 • **What part does anonymity play in all of our traditions?**

1774 • **What are the ties that bind us all together?**

1775 • **We must always keep our membership requirements first and foremost. Why?**

1776 The principle of anonymity lies at the core of our fellowship's understanding of group  
1777 conscience. The ideas of each individual group member have their importance, but the group  
1778 takes its guidance from the collective conscience of all its members. Before the group makes a  
1779 decision, its members consult their Higher Power, seeking spiritual guidance on the matter at  
1780 hand. There individual voices humbly join in developing a collective sense of God's will for  
1781 the group, and a strong common voice arises out of that mix to guide us all. We call this group  
1782 conscience. The same principle applies to NA's concept of leadership. Though individual  
1783 members serve as NA leaders, these leaders act only as our servants, carrying out their duties  
1784 in accordance with the group's conscience. The principles of selfless service and collective  
1785 guidance come before the personalities of our trusted servants.

1786 • **What is the role of anonymity in our group conscience?**



1787 • **Who are our leaders in Narcotics Anonymous and what is their responsibility to the**  
1788 **fellowship?**

1789 • **Where does the direction of our groups, as well as our trusted servants, come from?**

1790 • **The unity of our groups and NA, as such, comes from the conscience of our**  
1791 **membership. Why?**

1792 • **List the spiritual principles that should always come before the personalities of our**  
1793 **trusted servants?**

1794 Just as the principle of anonymity guides the evolution of a group's collective conscience, so  
1795 it also applies to group autonomy. Each group is, of course, entirely free to fulfill its primary  
1796 purpose as it sees fit, developing its own way of doing things and its own group personality.

1797 Our fellowship places only one restriction on this near-total liberty: The group may not  
1798 exercise its personality at the expense of neighboring groups or NA as a whole. The welfare  
1799 of each NA group depends, to an extent, on the welfare of all NA groups. Our groups do not  
1800 seek ascendancy over one another; rather, they join and cooperate to work for the greater  
1801 good of the fellowship as a whole. The principle of anonymity draws our autonomous groups  
1802 together for the common welfare of them all.

1803 • **What is the difference between anonymity and autonomy?**

1804 • **Why are both these principles so important in the unity of NA as a whole?**

1805 • **What do our groups seek to do in reference to the Twelfth Tradition?**

1806 • **What does "neighboring groups," mean?**

1807 • **What does autonomy allow the groups to do?**

1808 • **Name the one restriction placed on group autonomy and why is this important to the**  
1809 **fellowship as a whole?**

1810 The principle of anonymity shapes our primary purpose. Although individual ambition and  
1811 personal purpose may provide motivation for our development as human beings, our  
1812 fellowship is guided by its collective purpose: to carry our message to the still-suffering  
1813 addict. When we enter Narcotics Anonymous, we leave our personal agenda at the door. We  
1814 seek to help others rather than only ourselves. This selfless principle, not personal ambition,  
1815 defines the primary purpose of our groups.

- 1816 • **What shapes our primary purpose?**
- 1817 • **What is the difference between personal purpose and collective purpose?**
- 1818 • **Should we ever bring our personal agenda to Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 1819 • **What guides our fellowship?**
- 1820 • **What defines the primary purpose of our groups?**
- 1821 • **What role does anonymity play in our primary purpose?**

1822 Anonymity guides our fellowship's interactions in society. We are not a secret organization;  
1823 we are happy to see our name becoming better known throughout the world with each passing  
1824 year. However, we do not trade that name for the endorsement of organizations that might  
1825 possibly help us further our primary purpose. Nor do we attempt to gain public influence by  
1826 asserting the prestige of our fellowship's name. If we are fulfilling our primary purpose,  
1827 society will see our usefulness. We will have no need to trade our endorsement for the support  
1828 of others. The good spoken of us by our fellowship's friends will be sufficient  
1829 recommendation.

- 1830 • **What part does anonymity play in our interaction with society?**
- 1831 • **How does anonymity apply to the Sixth Tradition?**
- 1832 • **How does fulfilling our primary purpose relate to the Sixth Tradition?**

1833 • **Why is it that we need no endorsement from others? Explain.**

1834 Anonymity is one of the guiding principles behind the way our groups practice the Seventh  
1835 Tradition. We believe in the value of selfless generosity for its own sake. For this reason, we  
1836 choose to receive support from our members anonymously. We also encourage each group as  
1837 a whole to become fully self-supporting, not dependent on only one or two individual  
1838 members. The principle of selfless giving, without expectation of personal distinction or  
1839 reward, goes hand-in-hand with the principle of collective responsibility. Together, they  
1840 assure both the spiritual solidarity and the financial stability of our groups.

1841 • **What does selfless giving mean?**

1842 • **How does the principle of selfless giving apply to the Seventh Tradition?**

1843 • **Name some things we encourage the members and groups to do?**

1844 • **Why is it important that no one member of a group do more than their fare share?**

1845 • **What two principles go hand in hand?**

1846 • **What do these principles assure our groups?**

1847 This same principle of selfless anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Eighth Tradition.

1848 In Narcotics Anonymous, we have no professional Twelfth Steppers. Rather, we use the

1849 simple language of empathy to freely share with one another the spiritual experience we call

1850 recovery. A spiritual experience cannot be bought or sold; it can only be given away. The

1851 more we freely share that experience, the more we strengthen the empathy that joins us

1852 together. This tradition reminds us to place the principle of anonymous, selfless giving before

1853 whatever personal desires we may have for recognition or reward.

1854 • **What is the difference between anonymity and empathy?**

1855 • **What is selfless anonymity?**

- 1856 • **It is the spiritual foundation of what Tradition? Why?**
- 1857 • **What simple language do we use when we share our spiritual experience? Explain.**
- 1858 In Narcotics Anonymous, we apply the principle of anonymity in the way we structure our  
1859 service organization. Our fellowship has no authoritarian hierarchy. We create boards and  
1860 committees solely to serve us, not to govern. The various elements of our service structure are  
1861 guided by the primary purpose and collective conscience of our fellowship and are held  
1862 directly accountable for the service they do on our behalf. Those who serve on our various  
1863 boards and committees are expected to do so not to seek power, property, or prestige for  
1864 themselves, but to selflessly serve the fellowship that has made their recovery possible.
- 1865 • **Define authoritarian hierarchy.**
- 1866 • **Define selfless service.**
- 1867 • **Why is anonymity so important in our service efforts? Explain.**
- 1868 • **What guides our service structure?**
- 1869 • **For those that serve, why is it important they do not seek power, property, or**  
1870 **prestige for themselves?**
- 1871 Almost all our groups, service boards, and committees rotate different members through their  
1872 service positions, rarely asking one individual to serve in a particular position of  
1873 responsibility more than one or two terms in a row. The practice of rotation emphasizes our  
1874 fellowship's belief in the value of anonymity in service. NA service is not primarily a  
1875 personal endeavor; rather, it is the collective responsibility of our fellowship as a whole. This  
1876 doesn't mean that we do not appreciate the care, experience, and insight that individuals may  
1877 offer in carrying out their service duties. However, we place the principle of anonymity in

1878 service before the personalities of our individual trusted servants. Collective responsibility,  
1879 not personal authority, is the guiding force behind NA service.

1880 • **The rotation of our trusted servants is very important in Narcotics Anonymous.**

1881 **Why?**

1882 • **Who is responsible for NA service? Explain why.**

1883 • **What is the guiding force behind NA service?**

1884 • **What is the difference between collective responsibility and personal authority? (i.e.**  
1885 **principles before personalities)**

1886 The principle of anonymity gives form to our fellowship's public voice. Each of our many  
1887 members has personal opinions on a wide range of subjects. The public message our  
1888 fellowship carries, however, is the message of our collective experience in recovery from  
1889 addiction. As groups and as a fellowship, we have no opinions on anything but the NA  
1890 program itself. In our interactions with society, we present only the principles of our program,  
1891 not our members' personal opinions about other issues.

1892 • **What is the difference in personal and fellowship anonymity and why is it so**  
1893 **important?**

1894 • **What gives form to our fellowship's voice?**

1895 • **As members of NA, what do we have opinions on?**

1896 Anonymity applies not only to our public pronouncements but it is the principle underlying  
1897 the whole of our fellowship's public relations policy. In our public contacts, we base the  
1898 credibility of our program on NA's effectiveness, not on the personal reputation of any  
1899 individual member. We seek to attract addicts and gain public goodwill solely by virtue of  
1900 what we have to offer, not by grandiose promotional. Exaggerated claims about NA cannot

1901 take the place of the simple, proven validity of our message as the basis of our public relations  
1902 policy.

1903 • **Describe the principle of anonymity as it is applied to our public relations policy?**

1904 • **What does the message of our fellowship consist of?**

1905 • **What is the principle underlying the whole of our public relations policy?**

1906 • **How do we seek to attract addicts and public goodwill?**

1907 • **In our interactions with society, what do we present to the public?**

1908 Twelfth Tradition anonymity or “namelessness” serves a number of practical functions in our  
1909 fellowship, each of which has broad spiritual implications. By reminding us that “what’s said  
1910 in this meeting stays in this meeting,” our meeting formats help foster an atmosphere in which  
1911 none of us need to fear public disclosure of what we share in the intimacy of our groups. They  
1912 also remind us that the message, not the messenger, is what’s most important about the  
1913 sharing that occurs in our meetings.

1914 • **Anonymity in our meeting is the most precious thing we have. That namelessness,  
1915 that feeling of security from the public at large. Explain.**

1916 • **Give some reasons why anonymity in our meetings is priceless.**

1917 • **When attending a NA meeting, how are we reminded about anonymity? Give  
1918 examples.**

1919 • **What are the dangers of not respecting a member’s anonymity?**

1920 Twelfth Tradition anonymity also means that, in the final analysis, our personal differences  
1921 make no difference: In NA, in recovery, we are all equal. It’s true that we all come into  
1922 Narcotics Anonymous with our own personal histories, using patterns, educational and social  
1923 backgrounds, talents, and shortcomings. But for the purpose of our own recovery, our

1924 occupational identity has no bearing on our ability to care for one another in NA. A college  
1925 degree, a trust fund, illiteracy, poverty-these circumstances that so powerfully affect so many  
1926 other areas of our lives will neither help nor hinder our chances at recovery. Likewise, they  
1927 will not aid or impede our efforts to carry the message one addict to another.

1928 • **Our personal differences make no difference in Narcotics Anonymous. Explain.**

1929 • **Why are we all equal in Narcotics Anonymous? Explain.**

1930 • **What will neither hinder nor help our chances of recovery?**

1931 • **Will these things affect our ability to carry the message one addict to another?**

1932 • **Why does our occupational identity have no bearing on our ability to carry the**  
1933 **message?**

1934 • **What part do you feel that diversity plays in the health of NA?**

1935 • **Explain the great paradox of NA recovery?**

1936 • **Why should we place spiritual principles first?**

1937 We are equal in NA membership. We are all, at last, anonymous “part of” rather than  
1938 uniquely “apart from” the NA fellowship. The anonymity spoken of in our Twelfth Tradition  
1939 means that, we who have suffered so long from the isolating disease of addiction, “**finally**  
1940 **belong.**”

1941 • **Being a part of rather than apart from is what Narcotics Anonymous is all about.**  
1942 **Explain.**

1943 Truly, anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions. Without it, the unity upon  
1944 which personal recovery depends would dissolve in chaos of conflicting personalities. With it,  
1945 our groups are given a body of guiding principles, our Twelve Traditions, helping them join

1946 the personal strengths of their members in a fellowship that supports and nurtures the  
1947 recovery of us all.

1948 We pray that Narcotics Anonymous never becomes a gray, faceless collection of addicts  
1949 without personalities. We enjoy the color, the compassion, the initiative, and the rough-and-  
1950 tumble liveliness that arises from the diverse personalities of our members. In fact, our  
1951 diversity is our strength. We find that the stronger our individual members are, the more  
1952 strongly united our fellowship becomes. This is a great paradox of NA recovery: In joining  
1953 together in a commitment to the greater good of Narcotics Anonymous, our own welfare is  
1954 enhanced beyond measure. In surrendering self-will, humbly placing whatever individual  
1955 power we may have at the service of the whole, we find an amazing power not only greater  
1956 than our own but greater than the sum of all its parts. In serving the needs of others selflessly-  
1957 anonymously-we find our own needs served, in turn, far better than we ever could have  
1958 imagined. In joining anonymously in a fellowship with other recovering addicts, placing the  
1959 welfare of the group ahead of our own, our own spiritual growth is enhanced beyond measure,  
1960 not diminished. This is what Tradition Twelve means when it says that anonymity is the  
1961 spiritual foundation of all our traditions. So long as we place spiritual principles first, our  
1962 individual personalities can grow and flourish like never before, ensuring that our fellowship  
1963 also continues to flourish, strong and free.

1964 Our common welfare depends upon our unity. The only hope we have of maintaining that  
1965 unity amidst the tremendous diversity we find in Narcotics Anonymous is by the application  
1966 of certain common principles: those found in the Twelve Traditions. So long as we place the  
1967 practice of those principles before the exercise of our individual personalities, all will be well.



- 1968 • **Unity and anonymity are the keys to all that we do in Narcotics Anonymous. The**
- 1969 **responsibility is all of ours as members of this fellowship. Explain.**
- 1970 • **Diversity is our strength. Explain.**
- 1971 • **What enhances our own welfare? Give examples.**
- 1972 • **What happens when we put spiritual principles first?**
- 1973 • **What does our common welfare depend on?**