**On Tradition Twelve**  p-1

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

Editorial by Bill W.

A.A. Grapevine, November 1948

"*We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of Anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him Who presides over us all*."

ONE may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless; vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level; and to each of us a constant reminder that principles come before personal interest -- such is the wide scope of this all embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement; at a deeper spiritual level it points us to still greater self-renunciation.

A GLANCE at the 12 Traditions will instantly assure anyone that "giving up" is the essential idea of them all. In each Tradition, the individual or the group is asked to give up something for our general welfare.

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Tradition One* asks us to place the common good ahead of personal desire.

*Tradition Two* asks us to listen to God as He may speak in the Group Conscience.

*Tradition Three* requires that we exclude *no* alcoholic from A.A. membership.

*Tradition Four* implies that we abandon all idea of centralized human authority or government. But each group is enjoined to consult widely in matters affecting us all.

*Tradition Five* restricts the A.A. group to a single purpose, i.e. carrying our message to other alcoholics.

*Tradition Six* points at the corroding influence of money, property and personal authority; it begs that we keep these influences at a minimum by separate incorporation and management of our special services. It also warns against the natural temptation to make alliances or give endorsements.  
  
*Tradition Seven* states that we had best pay our own bills; that large contributions or those carrying obligations ought not be received; that public solicitation using the name Alcoholics Anonymous is positively dangerous.

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*Tradition Eight* forswears professionalizing our Twelfth Step work but it does guarantee our few paid service workers an unquestioned amateur status.

*Tradition Nine* asks that we give up all idea of expensive organization; enough is needed to permit effective work by our special services--and no more. This Tradition breathes democracy; our leadership is one of service and it is rotating; our few titles never clothe their holders with arbitrary personal authority; they hold authorizations *to serve, never to govern.*

*Tradition Ten* is an emphatic restraint of serious controversy; it implores each of us to take care against committing A.A. to the fires of reform, political or religious dissension.

*Tradition Eleven* asks, in our public relations, that we be alert against sensationalism and it declares there is never need to praise ourselves. Personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and film is urgently required, thus avoiding the pitfall of vanity, and the temptation through broken anonymity to link A.A. to other causes.

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Tradition Twelve*, in its mood of humble anonymity, plainly enough comprehends the preceding eleven. The "Twelve Points of Tradition" are little else than a specific application of the spirit of the "Twelve Steps of Recovery" to our group life and to our relations with society in general. The Recovery Steps would make each individual A.A. whole and one with God; the Twelve Points of Tradition would make us one with each other and whole with the world about us. Unity is our aim.

Our A.A. Traditions are, we trust, securely anchored in those wise precepts: charity, gratitude and humility. Nor have we forgotten *prudence*. May these virtues ever stand clear before us in our meditations; may Alcoholics Anonymous serve God in happy unison for so long as He may need us.  
  
Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, November, 1948

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST from the A.A. Grapevine

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.   
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Traditions Checklist-Tradition 12

1. Why is it good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?

2. When I do not trust AA’s current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?

3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?

4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?

5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?

6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition—or belief it?

7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?

8. Do I complain about certain AAs’ behavior—especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?

9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?

10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?

11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?

12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million AAs?  
  
  
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TRADITION 12  
 WORKSHOP