

## NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS GUIDE TO THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1  
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?**



1 **TRADITION TWO**

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

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

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

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

23 Those of us who have been involved in service or in getting a group started sometimes have a  
24 hard time letting go. Egos, unfounded pride, and self-will destroy a group if given authority. We must  
25 remember that positions have been placed in trust, that we are trusted servants, and that at no time do

26 any of us govern. Narcotics Anonymous is a God-given program, and we can maintain our group in  
27 dignity only with group conscience and God's love.

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

- 32 • **What is group conscience?**
- 33 • **Why is it important that we invite God into that process?**
- 34 • **What is a trusted servant?**

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

- 38 • **Are we governed by any of our chosen leaders? Why?**
- 39 • **What is effective service?**
- 40 • **How can I serve?**
- 41 • **Who is the ultimate authority?**
- 42 • **What is the difference between ego and egotism?**
- 43 • **How can I keep my ego from interfering with the group's conscience?**
- 44 • **What is meant by unfounded pride?**
- 45 • **If self-will destroys the group, how does selflessness put us in line with a God consciousness?**
- 46 • **How can I apply God consciousness in my other relationships outside the Fellowship?**

47         Personal service arises from the application of principles. Ideally, personal service is founded  
48 in a relationship with the same Higher Power that guides our personal recovery. This Higher Power  
49 also guides the various elements of our fellowship. Our direction in service comes from a God of our  
50 understanding, whether we serve as individuals, as a group, or as a service board or committee.

51 Whenever we come together, we seek the presence and guidance of this loving Higher Power. This  
52 direction then guides us through all our actions.

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

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

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

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

- 73 • **How are the principles of my personal recovery reflected in service?**
- 74 • **How am I willing to be guided by my Higher Power?**

75 • **How can I keep my personality out of service?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

96           When we choose a member to serve us in some capacity, we exercise mutual trust. We trust  
97 the conscience that influenced our selection since it reflects our collective relationship with a loving  
98 higher Power. We extend that trust to the members we have selected to serve. We have faith that they  
99 will apply principles in their actions, seek and share the most complete information available, and

100 work to further the group's well-being and our fellowship's common welfare. The relationship of  
101 trusted servants to the group is reciprocal: Members chosen to serve are asked to do so with dedication  
102 and fidelity, and those who've chosen them are responsible to support their servants.

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

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

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

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

### 121 **Applying spiritual principles**

122         Some of the principles that seem to be important in Tradition Two include surrender, faith,  
123 humility, open-mindedness, integrity, and anonymity. We begin with surrender to our ultimate  
124 authority, the God of our understanding, with whom we have developed a personal relationship. In this

125 case, we surrender to the direction of that Higher Power as it is revealed in our group conscience. We  
126 renew our commitment to the common welfare of NA when we place the needs of the fellowship  
127 ahead of our own desires.

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

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

- 136 • **Why is it necessary that I have faith in this process?**
- 137 • **What happens when I trust our Higher Power?**
- 138 • **What is my definition of faith?**

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

- 144 • **What is humility in this context?**
- 145 • **Why is humility so important in our group conscience?**
- 146 • **How are my strengths and weaknesses shown through humility?**

147 By practicing humility in our efforts to serve, we make room for open-mindedness. We  
148 remember that, just as we need the experience of other addicts to recover, so do we need their  
149 direction and ideas in order to serve. We learn to actively cultivate our listening skills, using our ears

150 more than our mouths in conversation. When we are open-minded, we hear and accept solutions  
151 offered by others in the development of group conscience. Application of this principle teaches us to  
152 set aside our prejudices in order to work with others. By practicing open-mindedness, we nurture an  
153 attitude of goodwill toward others and become willing to serve with our common good in mind. Only  
154 with an open mind can we recognize the guidance of a loving Higher Power.

155 • **What is the role of open-mindedness in a group conscience?**

156 • **How is listening the key to open-mindedness?**

157 • **What part does humility play in open-mindedness?**

158 • **How does being open-minded take me out of self?**

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

164 • **What is integrity?**

165 • **How do I know when I am practicing integrity?**

166 • **What part does honesty play in integrity?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 189 • **What does selfless service mean to me?**  
190 • **Who benefits from my service efforts?**  
191 • **In what ways am I benefited spiritually?**



1 **TRADITION THREE**

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

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

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

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

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

- 23 • **What happens when I try to measure the desire of others?**  
24 • **Who decides if I can be a member in Narcotics Anonymous?**

25 • **How does the Fellowship grow as a result of the Third Tradition?**

26 • **How can I extend care and concern to foster a sense of belonging in newcomers?**

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

35 • **Why is it so important that I generate an atmosphere of recovery?**

36 • **What is an invitational tone?**

37 • **What part can I play in this process?**

38 • **What are some other things I can do to help the newcomer feel welcome?**

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

46 • **Why are members backgrounds not a factor in their chances for recovery?**

47 • **What happens when I place expectations on another's chance for recovery?**

48 • **Does it matter what my drug of choice was? Why?**

49 • **Why is it impossible for me to determine who will stay clean?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 93     Applying spiritual principles

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

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

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

- 108 • **How can we practice tolerance as a group?**
- 109 • **What does tolerance mean to me as a member?**
- 110 • **What can I do as a member to show tolerance?**
- 111 • **How can intolerance affect both the individual and the group as a whole?**

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

- 120 • **In what ways can I show compassion to those with a desire to stop using?**
- 121 • **What is compassion in the context of Tradition Three?**
- 122 • **What is unconditional love?**

123 • **Why is it so important that I show compassion?**

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

129 • **What was it like for me when I came to my first meeting?**

130 • **What part does humility play in Tradition Three?**

131 • **How does knowing my own shortcoming help me see others in a different light?**

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

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

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

146 • **How does anonymity apply to the Third Tradition?**

147 • **What can I do to ensure that anonymity is applied?**

- 148 • **Why is anonymity so important to the Traditions?**

1 **TRADITION FOUR**

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

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

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

- 18 • **Why is creative freedom so important in Narcotics Anonymous?**  
19 • **What is autonomy in the context of Tradition Four?**  
20 • **How can we best achieve our primary purpose?**  
21 • **Why is it important that each group have its own character?**  
22 • **Being as diverse of a Fellowship as we are, why is it important that we vary in format in**  
23 **our groups?**

24 Every group has a niche to fill both in the Fellowship as a whole and in the local NA  
25 community. As a Fellowship, our ability to reach still-using addicts is tied to our willingness to



26 offer meetings that are accessible and attractive to those addicts. With the creative freedom  
27 offered by autonomy, we are encouraged to seek the particular role that meets the needs of both  
28 the NA community and our own group. We are free to make each group the very best it can be.  
29 The vitality of Narcotics Anonymous is enhanced by each group's willingness to find its niche  
30 and fill it.

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

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

41 One of the most common ways in which groups express their autonomy is in the choice  
42 of meeting format. Most NA communities will offer a number of different types of meetings,  
43 from speaker meetings to Step studies to topic discussion or any other format or combination of  
44 formats that meets the needs of local members. Some meetings will be open to the public, while  
45 others will be for addicts only. Larger communities may offer several different types of meetings  
46 each night. Some addicts will hear the message of recovery better in one type of meeting, while  
47 others prefer another format. An NA community that offers a variety of meetings is more likely to  
48 reach a broad cross-section of addicts. In a spirit of cooperation, we try to respect the autonomy  
49 of other groups by allowing them the freedom to carry the message in whatever manner seems  
50 best to them.

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

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

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

67 Since most groups are not directly connected with each other, we might think that  
68 whatever happens in our meetings has no effect on anyone else. When we consider whom our  
69 group affects, we have to look at other groups, the addict yet to come, the newcomer, and the  
70 neighborhood in which we hold our meetings. We have an effect on other groups or NA as a  
71 whole if we're not recognizable as an NA meeting. It helps to remember what we needed to hear  
72 when we were new: hope for recovery from drug addiction. Addicts first coming to NA often  
73 look closely for differences, hoping that somehow they won't fit in. It's not difficult to alienate an  
74 addict. It's important to think about the message we send to newcomers in our meetings.

75 Thoughtful consideration of our primary purpose may help ensure that meetings will be available  
76 for those addicts yet to come.

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

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

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

- 98 • **Why is the image of NA so important in the community?**
- 99 • **Who is responsible for portraying that image?**

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

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

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

103 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 **TRADITION FIVE**

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

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

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

- 18 • **What is the primary purpose of NA?**  
19 • **As a member, what is the message that I carry?**  
20 • **In what ways can I best carry this message?**  
21 • **Do I limit who I carry the message to?**  
22 • **What is the role of the group in carrying a clear message?**

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

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

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

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

40         Many distracting influences can divert us from our primary purpose. But each time our  
41 focus is diverted from our primary purpose, the addict seeking recovery loses out. Other  
42 influences can distort our group's focus on its primary purpose. From the money members  
43 contribute, our groups pay rent on their meeting space, buy literature and supplies, conduct  
44 activities, and support NA services. All of these can either help further our primary purpose or  
45 distract us from our focus. Some groups seek to outdo others with luxurious meeting spaces,  
46 extravagant refreshments, huge supplies of literature, and elaborate activities. When we do this,  
47 our focus is distracted away from our primary purpose and onto money, property, and prestige.  
48 We should try to establish a reputation for carrying the message—nothing more, nothing less.



49 Money, literature, and meeting space are tools we can use to help us carry the message; however,  
50 they should serve us, not rule us.

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

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

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

- 68 • **How well are we carrying the message of recovery?**
- 69 • **What addicts are not being reached by our group?**
- 70 • **How can we make our meetings more accessible?**
- 71 • **What can we do to make all members feel more welcome?**
- 72 • **Has the atmosphere of recovery diminished?**
- 73 • **Would a change in our meeting format strengthen that atmosphere?**

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

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

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

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

#### 94     Applying spiritual principles

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

- 98     • **How are Tradition Five and Step Twelve tied together?**

- 99 • **What does the phrase “spiritual awakening” mean to me and how does it apply to**  
100 **Tradition Five?**

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

- 109 • **What is integrity?**  
110 • **How do I practice integrity in my group?**  
111 • **What can I hope to achieve through integrity?**  
112 • **What part does integrity play in Tradition Five?**

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

- 118 • **Why is it my responsibility as a member to make sure that our primary purpose is**  
119 **kept?**  
120 • **How can I show that responsibility?**  
121 • **What is the responsibility of the group?**  
122 • **How does the group that responsibility to the Fellowship of NA as a whole?**

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

- 127 • **What part does unity play in the Tradition Five?**
- 128 • **Who is responsible for the unity of NA?**
- 129 • **What can I do as a member to maintain unity in my group?**
- 130 • **What can my group do to maintain the unity of NA as a whole?**
- 131 • **Why is it important for my group to actively participate in the Area Service Committee**  
132 **and its various subcommittees?**

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

- 137 • **What is the importance of anonymity?**
- 138 • **What does anonymity mean in the context of Tradition Five?**
- 139 • **Why is the message more important than the messenger?**
- 140 • **What can I do to maintain anonymity in the group as well as the Fellowship at large?**
- 141 • **How does anonymity apply in the context of service to the Fellowship?**
- 142 • **Why should we bring our skills to service work but leave behind our titles?**

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

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

1 **TRADITION SIX**

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

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

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

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

20 The Sixth Tradition warns us of three things that could blur the distinction between  
21 Narcotics Anonymous and other enterprises: endorsement, financing, and the lending of our  
22 name. An endorsement is a public statement of support for another organization. Financing  
23 another organization further endorses its purpose. Lending our name to a related facility or  
24 outside enterprise—allowing an addiction treatment facility, for example, to call itself The NA

25 Medical Center—is the ultimate endorsement, permanently tying our primary purpose to theirs in  
26 the public eye.

- 27 • **How is our primary purpose defined?**
- 28 • **What can we do to insure that our primary purpose is kept?**
- 29 • **What is an endorsement?**
- 30 • **How could accepting money from outside enterprises cause us problems?**
- 31 • **Why shouldn't we lend our name?**

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

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

47 We must exist in the world. It is not possible to be entirely separate, evading all contact  
48 with outside agencies. Not only is it impossible, it's not a good idea. Cooperation with others is  
49 healthy for Narcotics Anonymous. Contacts between our groups and the public help others

50 understand NA better. They help increase public goodwill toward NA. They lead doctors,  
51 teachers, friends, and relatives to recommend NA to addicts who want recovery. They help us  
52 carry the message to addicts who cannot get to regular meetings. Letting others know who we are  
53 and what we offer increases the chance that addicts seeking recovery will hear our message.

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

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

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

72       There are many related facilities and outside enterprises devoted to understanding  
73 addiction and aiding recovery. Like NA, each has its particular primary purpose that is reflected  
74 in its literature and its message. While that purpose may be similar to ours, it will not be the same



75 as ours because the organization is separate from us. We use NA literature and speakers in our  
76 meetings to help us fulfill NA's purpose. An NA group that uses another organization's literature  
77 or speakers endorses that organization's primary purpose, not ours.

- 78 • **Why is it so important that we not confuse our primary purpose?**
- 79 • **Why is using only NA literature and speakers important to fulfilling our primary**  
80 **purpose?**
- 81 • **Why should we separate ourselves from outside facilities and enterprises?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 118 Applying spiritual principles

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

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

130 • **How do humility, integrity, faith, harmony, and anonymity apply to the Sixth**  
131 **Tradition?**

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

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

136 • **How do we measure our integrity as a group?**

137 • **How can I as a member measure my integrity?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

165 • **How is anonymity defined in the context of the Sixth Tradition?**

166 • **What qualities should we look for in individuals whom we chose to interact outside**  
167 **agencies on behalf of NA?**

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

1 **TRADITION SEVEN**

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

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

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

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

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

22 How a meeting is begun is not nearly so important as how it grows. Our experience is  
23 that, once a meeting is established, it gathers momentum. The meeting begins attracting a group  
24 of addicts who attend on a fairly consistent basis. These addicts share their experiences with one  
25 another and help each other better understand NA’s principles of recovery. At this point, the

26 meeting has become more than just an event; an NA group evolved from the meeting, complete  
27 with members committed to supporting one another. The group as a whole is ready to take full  
28 responsibility for its obligations.

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

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

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

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

48 After paying their basic expenses, most groups contribute to the NA Service Boards and  
49 Committees that serve them. Phonedlines, Meeting lists, NA literature, H&I panels, and Public  
50 Information presentations all benefit the group. That's why service contributions are just as surely

51 a part of a group's self-support obligation as the rent for its meeting room. Like the groups, NA  
52 Service Boards and Committees decline contributions from sources outside the Fellowship.  
53 Unlike the groups, however, our service boards and committees are not themselves fully self-  
54 supporting. They have been created to help the groups fulfill their primary purpose more  
55 effectively, and they depend on group contributions for the money they need to do their work.

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

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

- 69 • **What can I do to support our Seventh Tradition in my group, service board or**  
70 **committees?**
- 71 • **What does self-support mean to me?**
- 72 • **Why is it important for members to consistently show up at meetings?**

73 As simple as a group's needs are, a group's decision to become fully self supporting does  
74 not usually require the commitment of extensive amounts of its member's money, time, or other

75 resources. If a group is having problems sustaining itself, it may want to ask itself some questions  
76 during a group inventory:

- 77 • **What is our primary purpose, and how do we fulfill it?**
- 78 • **Are our service committees doing everything that they can to fulfill our primary**  
79 **purpose?**
- 80 • **What does our group need to fulfill its primary purpose?**
- 81 • **How have we confused our wants with our needs?**

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

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

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

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



99 fulfillment of that need we have for one another's support. An NA group reinforces the solidarity  
100 of its members and the foundation of their continued recovery by declining outside contributions.

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

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

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

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

- 122 • **What should a group do to meet its obligations?**
- 123 • **If passing the hat doesn't work, what alternatives does a group have?**

- 124 • **What problems could arise should a group sell goods or services at its meetings?**  
125 • **How do you know when these money-making activities are distracting the group from**  
126 **its primary purpose?**

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

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

- 137 • **What is the importance of our own contributions?**  
138 • **What part does anonymity play in the Seventh Tradition?**  
139 • **How can depending on funds other than our own contributions divert us from our**  
140 **primary purpose?**

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

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

149           At the same time as we consider our levels of personal contributions to the group, we  
150 should remember that Tradition Seven speaks of the group as being self-supporting, not of one or  
151 two well-off group members paying all the group’s expenses or doing all its work. We each do  
152 well in giving our part toward the group’s self-support obligations without making the group  
153 overly dependent on our individual contributions.

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

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

#### 164     **Applying spiritual principles**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 206 • **Why is it important that we keep it simple?**

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

- 211 • **How is integrity applied to the Seventh Tradition?**

- 212 • **How important is commitment to this tradition?**

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

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

- 221 • **How can I practice anonymity in Tradition Seven?**

222           Our anonymity, our integrity, our faith, our sense of simplicity, our acceptance of  
223 responsibility, our gratitude-together, all these things spell freedom. By encouraging our group to

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224 pay its own way, the Seventh Tradition gives our group freedom to share its recovery as it sees  
225 fit, not obligated to outside contributors. Further, it gives our group the freedom that comes from  
226 inner strength, the strength that develops through applying spiritual principles. By making the  
227 decision to become fully self-supporting, our NA group assures that it will always have the  
228 resources it needs to survive and continue fulfilling its primary purpose.

- 229 • **Define freedom as it is related to being fully self-supporting?**  
230 • **How does my freedom come from being self-supporting?**

1 **TRADITION EIGHT**

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

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

- 10 • **Define professionals.**
- 11 • **What is the difference between a non-professional approach and a professional**  
12 **approach?**
- 13 • **Define special workers.**
- 14 • **What is the difference between professionals and special workers?**

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

23       This is not to say that a member of Narcotics Anonymous should never take a job as a  
24 professional therapist of one sort or another. It is only to say that, at an NA meeting, a member's

25 vocation is irrelevant. The therapeutic value in the message we share with one another lies in our  
26 personal experience in recovery, not in our credentials, our training, or our professional status.

- 27 • **What is the heart of the NA way?**
- 28 • **What is the message we share as members?**
- 29 • **Should our professional status have any bearing on our ability to carry the message of**  
30 **recovery?**
- 31 • **As a professional and a NA member, how do I not treat a member as a client?**
- 32 • **Define therapeutic value in Narcotics Anonymous.**

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

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

#### 45 Applying spiritual principles

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 92 • **Define integrity as it relates to the Eighth Tradition.**
- 93 • **Why is practicing integrity so important to this Tradition?**
- 94 • **Who holds the responsibility of the integrity of the Eighth Tradition?**
- 95 • **What is the therapeutic value of one addict helping another addict?**

1 **TRADITION NINE**

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

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

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

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

- 25 • **What are service boards and committees?**

- 26 • **What is the importance of forming service boards and committees to serve the group?**
- 27 • **When is it okay for us to be organized?**
- 28 • **Should our organization ever interfere with our primary purpose and why?**

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

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

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

- 45 • **What is a GSR?**
- 46 • **How does the GSR serve its group?**
- 47 • **How is an area service committee formed? Explain.**
- 48 • **What is an area subcommittee? Give Examples.**
- 49 • **What are the needs these service boards and committees fulfill?**

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

- 61     • **Do the committees and service boards serve the groups or do the groups serve them?**  
62       **Give examples.**
- 63     • **What part does unity play in the area committee? Give examples.**
- 64     • **Where should the support for our service boards and committees come from and why**  
65       **should it be given?**

66           As our groups grow, so does our needs from our area grow. Explain.  
67 First, the groups define their needs; then, they create the boards and committees which will serve  
68 them. Once created, how do we assure that our service boards and committees will remain  
69 directly responsible to those they serve? We do this, first and foremost, through consistent  
70 communication. Through their representatives, groups communicate with the boards and  
71 committees serving them. The groups provide regular information about their condition and their  
72 activities. They communicate their concerns, their needs, their ideas, and their wishes. This  
73 information helps our boards and committees better understand and serve the needs of the groups.

- 74 • **What subcommittee is created at the area level to assure that our service boards and**  
75 **committees remain directly responsible to the groups they serve?**
- 76 • **How do we hold our representatives accountable to the groups they serve?**
- 77 • **Why is communication so important? Explain.**
- 78 • **How does this apply to our primary purpose?**
- 79 • **What kind of information should the groups communicate to these boards and**  
80 **committees? Be specific.**

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

- 89 • **Communication is a two-way street. Explain.**
- 90 • **What is the difference between responsible service boards and committees and**  
91 **irresponsible service boards and committees? Give three examples of each.**
- 92 • **What are policies generated to achieve?**

93 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

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

- 105     • **What is the most important focus of Tradition Nine? Explain.**
- 106     • **What does simplicity mean in reference to Tradition Nine? Give examples.**

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

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

119           Another principle implicit in the Ninth Tradition is the principle of humility. Each group  
120 on its own is somewhat limited in its ability to fulfill its primary purpose; it has only so many  
121 members, so much time, and so many dollars to use in carrying the message by itself. However,  
122 when a number of groups combine their resources by joining together to form a service board or

123 committee, they enhance their ability to fulfill their primary purpose. Together, they become able  
124 to do what they could not do alone.

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

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

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

- 138 • **Define the principle of prudence.**
- 139 • **How do we apply this principle to the Ninth Tradition?**

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

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



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

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

1 **TRADITION TEN**

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

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

- 10 • **What spiritual principles do we apply in this Tradition?**
- 11 • **What is the primary purpose in Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 12 • **Why does NA have no opinion on outside issues? Explain.**
- 13 • **What is public controversy? Give examples.**
- 14 • **Elaborate on the message of Tradition Ten.**

15 To most of us, it probably seems obvious that Narcotics Anonymous, as a fellowship, has  
16 no opinion on the pressing world issues of our day. Most of these issues have little to do  
17 with either addiction or recovery. But there are a great number of addiction related issues  
18 that others might expect a worldwide society of recovering drug addicts to take positions  
19 on. "What is NA's opinion," we are sometimes asked, "on the addiction treatment  
20 industry, other twelve step fellowships, the legalization of drugs, addiction related  
21 illnesses, and all the rest?" Our answer, according to Tradition Ten, is that our groups and  
22 our fellowship take no position, pro or con, on any issues except the NA program itself.

23 We maintain neutrality on such issues so that we can maintain our focus on what we do  
24 best: sharing recovery from one addict to another.

- 25 • **Why doesn't NA express an opinion on addiction related issues?**
- 26 • **What do we have to lose by not remaining neutral?**
- 27 • **What benefits do we gain by maintaining neutrality?**
- 28 • **What is our position on issues outside the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 29 • **Should we ever express our opinion on outside issues? Explain.**
- 30 • **How do outside entities get information on Narcotics Anonymous?**

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

- 43 • **Should I ever represent NA alone?**
- 44 • **What views does NA have about getting clean?**
- 45 • **Should we ever have to defend our position as a fellowship? Explain.**

46 • **How can we explain NA without creating controversy?**

47 Tradition Ten restricts NA, as a fellowship, from stating opinions on outside issues.

48 However, it places no such restriction on the individual member. In Narcotics

49 Anonymous, we believe strongly in personal freedom. Addicts who have a desire to stop

50 using can become members of NA simply by expressing that desire. We have no dues or

51 fees, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone, ever. Through a spiritual

52 program, we encourage our members to develop their own understanding of a Higher

53 Power. Even our leaders are but trusted servants, with no power to tell individual

54 members what to do, think, or say. NA members are encouraged to think for themselves,

55 to develop their own opinions, and to express those opinions as they see fit.

56 The only caution Tradition Ten offers individual NA members is that, when speaking

57 publicly, we think through what we're going to say before we say it. In certain situations,

58 anything an NA member says will be taken as NA's opinion, even when the situation

59 itself has nothing to do with Narcotics Anonymous and the member clearly states that the

60 views expressed are strictly personal. It is not our fault if others misinterpret what we say

61 as individuals; this does not, make the complications arising from such misinterpretations

62 any less serious for NA. We may be able to avoid such complications before they arise

63 simply by thinking carefully before we speak in public.

64 • **What 3 things are not required to become a member of NA?**

65 • **How do we, as individuals, keep misinterpretations of NA from happening?**

66 • **Are we restricted as individual NA members? Explain.**

67 • **How does Spirituality come into play in Tradition Ten?**

68 • **How do we know if it's a NA opinion or an individual opinion? Explain.**

- 69 • **What are our responsibilities as member to NA as a whole? Explain.**
- 70 • **What is public opinion? Describe.**
- 71 • **In what ways does PI work related to the Tenth Tradition.**

72 But what about speaking in a recovery gathering? Does the Tenth Tradition tell us that, as  
73 individual recovering addicts, we must not talk in NA meetings about the challenges we  
74 face? No, it does not. While a particular problem may be an outside issue, its effect on  
75 our recovery is not; everything affecting a recovering addict's life is material for sharing.  
76 If a problem we are having impacts our ability to stay clean and grow spiritually, it's not  
77 an outside issue

- 78 • **What is the difference between a recovery gathering and a NA meeting?**  
79 **Explain.**
- 80 • **How do we share outside issues that affect our recovery, so we can get a**  
81 **solution? Give examples.**
- 82 • **What is the difference with outside issues and our personal experiences; can we**  
83 **share both of these in a NA meeting?**
- 84 • **What is freedom in Narcotics Anonymous? Explain.**
- 85 • **What precautions should NA members take in speaking at NA functions?**  
86 **Explain.**

87 Many things can put us off balance and challenge our recovery. We often discuss such  
88 challenges with one another at our meetings, seeking to ease our personal burdens by  
89 sharing them with our fellow NA members. We ask others to share how they have  
90 applied the principles of the program in similar circumstances, recovering their balance

91 and strengthening their recovery. We need no one's permission to talk about such things  
92 in our meetings.

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

- 97 • **How do I really know if what I share is recovery material? Give examples.**
- 98 • **Am I sharing from my experience, or am I expounding an opinion?**
- 99 • **As an individual, am I dwelling in the problem or seeking the solution?**
- 100 • **Do I share to draw the group together or to force the group into separate**  
101 **camps? Explain.**
- 102 • **Do I make it clear that what I say, I say for myself, not for Narcotics**  
103 **anonymous?**
- 104 • **Do I share about how I use the spiritual principles of NA in my recovery? Give**  
105 **examples.**

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

- 108 • **What is our common welfare? Give examples.**
- 109 • **What kinds of controversy can distract us from recovery? Give examples.**

110

### 111 **Applying spiritual principles**

112 Foremost among the principles our groups and our fellowship apply in practicing

113 Tradition Ten is the principle of unity. For all the diversity of individual opinion among

114 our members, Narcotics Anonymous itself is united in having no opinion on any issues  
115 apart from its own program. As a fellowship, we agree to take positions only on those  
116 ideals that have drawn us together, our principles of recovery, not on the many personal  
117 opinions that might divide us.

- 118 • **How is the principle of unity expressed in the Tenth Tradition?**
- 119 • **What can we do as individual members to ensure that the unity of NA**  
120 **continues?**

121 The Tenth Tradition is an exercise in responsibility. As groups and as a fellowship, we  
122 are responsible to carry our message to the still-suffering addict. We are responsible to  
123 provide an atmosphere in which recovering addicts can share freely with one another. To  
124 do these things effectively, we must stay as free of the distractions of public controversy  
125 as possible. We absolutely can avoid any controversies, which might arise from groups  
126 or the fellowship taking positions on issues entirely outside the scope of our program.

127 Individual NA members responsibly exercise the Tenth Tradition by personally guarding  
128 NA's neutrality whenever and whatever they speak. Publicly, we differentiate between  
129 our personal opinions and those of NA, avoiding the expression of any personal opinions  
130 at all in circumstances where the difference might not be recognized. In meetings, NA  
131 members make it clear that what we share is our own experience, not the position of  
132 Narcotics Anonymous, providing as little opportunity as possible for misinterpretation.

133 The way we speak as NA members often affects how others view NA; therefore, as  
134 responsible members, we speak carefully, guarding the neutrality that is so important to  
135 the welfare of us all.

- 136 • **Is it important to make it clear that what we share is our own opinion? Why?**

137 • **What is our responsibility as member, as groups, and as a fellowship in the**  
138 **Tenth Tradition?**

139 • **When sharing in a NA meeting or Public Gathering is it appropriate to use**  
140 **“we” instead of “I”?**

141 • **How do we fulfill our obligation to avoid controversy? Explain.**

142 • **Why is it important we to stay free from distractions?**

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

152 • **What is prudence?**

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

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

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

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



160 Tradition Ten is supremely practical. The only issue upon which our fellowship is willing  
161 to publicly stake its reputation is the NA program itself. Underlying the practicality of the  
162 Tenth Tradition, however, can be found a fundamental spiritual principle, that of  
163 humility. Narcotics Anonymous does not claim to have the answer to every trouble in the  
164 world. We do not even claim that we necessarily have the only answer to addiction.

165 When we share in public, as groups or as a fellowship, we share only our message. We  
166 talk about what we do, neither supporting nor opposing what anyone else does. We are  
167 what we are, and that's all that we are: a society of recovering drug addicts sharing their  
168 recovery with one another and offering the same to the addict who still suffers. We speak  
169 simply about our program, knowing that our effectiveness will attract more goodwill than  
170 any amount of promotion. Our program has worked for us and is available for others  
171 interested in recovery. If we can be of service, we stand ready to help.

- 172 • **Define anonymity?**
- 173 • **Why is anonymity so important to the Tenth Tradition?**
- 174 • **The welfare of Narcotics Anonymous is at stake, the public opinion should be**  
175 **considered. Explain.**

1 **TRADITION ELEVEN**

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

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

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

13 Most NA groups have some sort of contact with the public in their everyday affairs. But  
14 the public relations spoken of in the Eleventh Tradition are more deliberate than our  
15 group's routine encounters with those outside the fellowship. The existence of a public  
16 relations "policy" implies the importance of a public relations "program" in carrying out  
17 our fellowship's primary purpose. Public information work, done properly, is not  
18 promoted; rather, it seeks to make NA attractive to those who might need us. As NA  
19 groups, service boards, and committees, we deliberately and energetically cultivate good  
20 public relations, not as an incidental result of our normal activity but as a way to better  
21 carry our message to addicts. Narcotics Anonymous is not a secret society; Tradition  
22 Eleven speaks to personal anonymity, not fellowship anonymity. The better known we

23 are by the public, the more likely it is that addicts seeking recovery-or their friends,  
24 relatives, co-workers will think of us and know where to find us when they decide to seek  
25 help. One way to take part in NA's public relations program is to become involved in the  
26 local Public Information Subcommittee.

- 27 • **Why is Tradition Eleven the cornerstone of NA's public relation policy?**
- 28 • **Is NA a secret society? Explain.**
- 29 • **Why do we have the public information subcommittee?**
- 30 • **How is public information promoted and what does it seek to do?**
- 31 • **Who is responsible for its support?**
- 32 • **Who does the Public Information Subcommittee address?**
- 33 • **How do I get involved in the Public Information Subcommittee?**
- 34 • **What other Traditions involve public relations? Explain.**

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

- 41 • **Why should we not make exaggerated claims about NA?**
- 42 • **List examples of exaggerated claims about NA.**
- 43 • **What does our public relations program offer? Give examples.**
- 44 • **How important is it that we always represent who we are, what we do, and**

45 • **how we do it?**

46 Some organizations use celebrity members as public spokespersons, hoping to enhance  
47 the organization's credibility by tying it to the celebrity's status. This may be fine for  
48 other organizations. But Tradition Eleven tells us in no uncertain terms that, in NA's  
49 public relations efforts, we must never do this-not with celebrity members, not with any  
50 member. If our fellowship used a celebrity member in a public announcement about NA  
51 and the celebrity later relapsed or otherwise suffered a loss of prestige, what good would  
52 that do to our fellowship's credibility? The same could apply to any individual member  
53 put in the public spotlight on NA's behalf. The credibility of NA's message can be greatly  
54 affected by NA's messengers. In the public eye-including press, radio, film, and all other  
55 media-we need always maintain personal anonymity.

56 • **Why should we never use celebrities as spokespersons for Narcotics**

57 **Anonymous?**

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

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

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

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

62 The same applies to other kinds of public information work. Public anonymity helps keep  
63 the focus of our public relations on the NA message, not the PI workers involved. We  
64 never do PI work alone because as a team-even a pair-better displays NA as a fellowship  
65 to the public, while individuals tend to draw attention to themselves. Teams also tend to  
66 keep the personalities of their members in check, the better to ensure that NA and not the

67 individual addict is what we present to the public. The true statement that "an addict  
68 alone is in bad company" applies to our public relations efforts just as well as to our  
69 personal recovery.

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

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

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

76 Other circumstances may also warrant the disclosure of our NA membership. When a  
77 friend tells us about the struggles another person is having with addiction, we may want  
78 to let that friend know about Narcotics Anonymous and what it has done for us. When a  
79 co-worker has a drug problem, we may want to share our experience with that person.

80 None of us will want to indiscriminately trumpet all the gory details of our addiction to  
81 everyone in town, nor will we disclose our NA membership to everyone we meet. When  
82 we think we may be helpful to someone, it may be appropriate to share a bit of our story  
83 and the recovery we've found in Narcotics Anonymous.

84 • **List several reasons why we don't disclose our NA membership to everyone.**

85 **Give at least four examples.**

86 • **How do we share about NA without breaking our own anonymity?**

87 • **When is it appropriate to disclose our NA membership?**

88 • **Name some circumstances when anonymity becomes a personal decision.**

- 89 • **Should we make it clear when this is our own experience with NA?**  
90 • **When I share my experience, strength, and hope is it okay to break someone**  
91 **else's anonymity?**

92 All our members play a part in our public relations, whether or not they're involved in  
93 public information work. When individual addicts demonstrate recovery at work in their  
94 lives, they become our strongest attraction, a living testament of NA's effectiveness.  
95 Seeing us now, those who know what we once were like will spread the word to those  
96 they meet that NA works. The further that message is carried, the more likely it is that  
97 addicts seeking recovery will be attracted to the warm, loving support of our fellowship.  
98 By the same token, we must remember that, wherever we go, we always represent NA to  
99 some degree. If we are seen acting poorly while we prominently display an NA logo on  
100 our T-shirt, we carry a distinctly unattractive message about our fellowship to the public.  
101 What we say and what we do reflects on our NA recovery and the NA Fellowship. As  
102 responsible NA members, we want that reflection to be a source of attraction rather than a  
103 source of embarrassment.

- 104 • **Can any recovering addict play a part in public information work? Give**  
105 **examples.**
- 106 • **The best public relations in Narcotics Anonymous is the recovering addict.**  
107 **Explain.**
- 108 • **Give examples in which our behavior reflects on the NA fellowship, both in a**  
109 **positive and a negative light.**
- 110 •

111 **Applying spiritual principles**

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

119 • **What part does faith play in the Eleventh Tradition?**

120 • **Do we have to sell our program of recovery? Explain.**

121 The principle of service, critical to the application of our Eleventh Tradition, is not a  
122 passive principle. To be of maximum service to the still-suffering addict, we must  
123 energetically seek to carry our message throughout our cities, towns, and villages. Our  
124 public relations policy is based on attraction, to be sure, not promotion. But to attract the  
125 still-suffering addict to our program, we must take vigorous steps to make our program  
126 widely known. The better and broader our public relations, the better we will be able to  
127 serve.

128 • **How can we use the spiritual principles of the program to attract new members?**

129 • **Narcotics Anonymous is about attraction not promotion. Explain.**

130 • **How can we vigorously make our program known?**

131 • **How far reaching does NA extend in your city, state, country, and throughout**  
132 **the world?**

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

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



1 **TRADITION TWELVE**

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

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

- 11 • **If the spiritual principles are the guiding force of the fellowship, what is our**  
12 **guiding force as individuals?**
- 13 • **What other Traditions are present in Tradition Twelve?**
- 14 • **The Traditions describe a fellowship that takes its collective guidance from**  
15 **spiritual principles rather than individual personalities. Explain.**
- 16 • **What does the principle of anonymity mean to the fellowship and me?**
- 17 • **Anonymity is essential in preserving the stability of our fellowship, making**  
18 **personal recovery possible. Recovery is a delicate thing. It grows best in a stable,**  
19 **supportive environment. Each of us and each of our groups play a part in**  
20 **maintaining that stability. Our unity is so precious that, given a choice between**  
21 **fulfilling our own wishes and preserving our fellowship’s common welfare, we**  
22 **put the best interests of NA first. We do this not only out of enlightened self-**

- 23        **interest but also out of our sense of responsibility to our fellow addicts. The**  
24        **principle of NA unity comes before the fulfillment of our personal wishes.**
- 25        • **What are the member's part as well as the group's part in preserving the unity**  
26        **of NA?**
- 27        • **What is essential in preserving the stability of our fellowship?**
- 28        • **How does anonymity assure stability?**
- 29        • **How can I practice the principle of anonymity?**
- 30        • **In what kind of atmosphere does our recovery grow best?**
- 31        • **The welfare of Narcotics Anonymous should always come first. Why?**

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

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

39        The principle of anonymity lies at the core of our fellowship's understanding of group  
40        conscience. The ideas of each individual group member have their importance, but the  
41        group takes its guidance from the collective conscience of all its members. Before the  
42        group makes a decision, its members consult their Higher Power, seeking spiritual  
43        guidance on the matter at hand. Their individual voices humbly join in developing a  
44        collective sense of God's will for the group, and a strong common voice arises out of that

45 mix to guide us all. We call this group conscience. The same principle applies to NA's  
46 concept of leadership. Though individual members serve as NA leaders, these leaders act  
47 only as our servants, carrying out their duties in accordance with the group's conscience.  
48 The principles of selfless service and collective guidance come before the personalities of  
49 our trusted servants.

- 50 • **What is the role of anonymity in our group conscience?**
- 51 • **Who are our leaders in Narcotics Anonymous and what is their responsibility to**  
52 **the fellowship?**
- 53 • **Where does the direction of our groups, as well as our trusted servants, come**  
54 **from?**
- 55 • **The unity of our groups and NA, as such, comes from the conscience of our**  
56 **membership. Why?**
- 57 • **List the spiritual principles that should always come before the personalities of**  
58 **our trusted servants?**

59 Just as the principle of anonymity guides the evolution of a group's collective conscience,  
60 so it also applies to group autonomy. Each group is, of course, entirely free to fulfill its  
61 primary purpose as it sees fit, developing its own way of doing things and its own group  
62 personality. Our fellowship places only one restriction on this near-total liberty: The  
63 group may not exercise its personality at the expense of neighboring groups or NA as a  
64 whole. The welfare of each NA group depends, to an extent, on the welfare of all NA  
65 groups. Our groups do not seek ascendancy over one another; rather, they join and

66 cooperate to work for the greater good of the fellowship as a whole. The principle of  
67 anonymity draws our autonomous groups together for the common welfare of them all.

- 68 • **What is the difference between anonymity and autonomy?**
- 69 • **Why are both these principles so important in the unity of NA as a whole?**
- 70 • **What do our groups seek to do in reference to the Twelfth Tradition?**
- 71 • **What does “neighboring groups,” mean?**
- 72 • **What does autonomy allow the groups to do?**
- 73 • **Name the one restriction placed on group autonomy and why is this important to**  
74 **the fellowship as a whole?**

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

- 81 • **What shapes our primary purpose?**
- 82 • **What is the difference between personal purpose and collective purpose?**
- 83 • **Should we ever bring our personal agenda to Narcotics Anonymous?**
- 84 • **What guides our fellowship?**
- 85 • **What defines the primary purpose of our groups?**
- 86 • **What role does anonymity play in our primary purpose?**

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

- 95 • **What part does anonymity play in our interaction with society?**
- 96 • **How does anonymity apply to the Sixth Tradition?**
- 97 • **How does fulfilling our primary purpose relate to the Sixth Tradition?**
- 98 • **Why is it that we need no endorsement from others? Explain.**

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

- 107 • **What does selfless giving mean?**

- 108 • **How does the principle of selfless giving apply to the Seventh Tradition?**
- 109 • **Name some things we encourage the members and groups to do?**
- 110 • **Why is it important that no one member of a group do more than their fare**  
111 **share?**
- 112 • **What two principles go hand in hand?**
- 113 • **What do these principles assure our groups?**
- 114 This same principle of selfless anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Eighth  
115 Tradition. In Narcotics Anonymous, we have no professional Twelfth Steppers. Rather,  
116 we use the simple language of empathy to freely share with one another the spiritual  
117 experience we call recovery. A spiritual experience cannot be bought or sold; it can only  
118 be given away. The more we freely share that experience, the more we strengthen the  
119 empathy that joins us together. This tradition reminds us to place the principle of  
120 anonymous, selfless giving before whatever personal desires we may have for recognition  
121 or reward.
- 122 • **What is the difference between anonymity and empathy?**
- 123 • **What is selfless anonymity?**
- 124 • **It is the spiritual foundation of what Tradition? Why?**
- 125 • **What simple language do we use when we share our spiritual experience?**  
126 **Explain.**
- 127 In Narcotics Anonymous, we apply the principle of anonymity in the way we structure  
128 our service organization. Our fellowship has no authoritarian hierarchy. We create boards  
129 and committees solely to serve us, not to govern. The various elements of our service

130 structure are guided by the primary purpose and collective conscience of our fellowship  
131 and are held directly accountable for the service they do on our behalf. Those who serve  
132 on our various boards and committees are expected to do so not to seek power, property,  
133 or prestige for themselves, but to selflessly serve the fellowship that has made their  
134 recovery possible.

- 135 • **Define authoritarian hierarchy.**
- 136 • **Define selfless service.**
- 137 • **Why is anonymity so important in our service efforts? Explain.**
- 138 • **What guides our service structure?**
- 139 • **For those that serve, why is it important they do not seek power, property, or**  
140 **prestige for themselves?**

141 Almost all our groups, service boards, and committees rotate different members through  
142 their service positions, rarely asking one individual to serve in a particular position of  
143 responsibility more than one or two terms in a row. The practice of rotation emphasizes  
144 our fellowship's belief in the value of anonymity in service. NA service is not primarily a  
145 personal endeavor; rather, it is the collective responsibility of our fellowship as a whole.  
146 This doesn't mean that we do not appreciate the care, experience, and insight that  
147 individuals may offer in carrying out their service duties. However, we place the  
148 principle of anonymity in service before the personalities of our individual trusted  
149 servants. Collective responsibility, not personal authority, is the guiding force behind NA  
150 service.

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

152 **Why?**

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

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

155 • **What is the difference between collective responsibility and personal authority?**

156 **(i.e. principles before personalities)**

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

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

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

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

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



172 claims about NA cannot take the place of the simple, proven validity of our message as  
173 the basis of our public relations policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NA Guide to the Twelve Traditions  
TRADITION TWELVE Including Revisions from  
LSRSC Literature Committee Meeting May 2003

216 Truly, anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions. Without it, the unity  
217 upon which personal recovery depends would dissolve in chaos of conflicting  
218 personalities. With it, our groups are given a body of guiding principles, our Twelve  
219 Traditions, helping them join the personal strengths of their members in a fellowship that  
220 supports and nurtures the recovery of us all.

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

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

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