

Fellowship Traditions Checklist

Tradition 1 - Principle of Unity

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

- 1) Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
- 2) Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
- 3) Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
- 4) Do I make competitive remarks, such as comparing or contrasting one group with another?
- 5) Do I put down some Fellowship activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of it?
- 6) Am I informed about the Fellowship as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
- 7) Am I as considerate of all the members as I want them to be of me?
- 8) Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behaviour that bristles with hostility?
- 9) Do I go to enough Fellowship meetings or read enough literature to really keep in touch?
- 10) Do I share with the Fellowship all of the bad, the good, and me accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

Tradition 2 - Principle of Authority

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

- 1) Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group's trusted servants, officers, committees, newcomers and old-timers?
- 2) Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, in my service or other Fellowship responsibility?
- 3) Do I look for credit in my service work or expect praise for my ideas?
- 4) Do I have to save face in-group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
- 5) Although I have been clean a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at Fellowship's chores?
- 6) In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge

Tradition 3 - Principle of Eligibility

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

- 1) In my mind, do I prejudge some new members as losers?
- 2) Is there some kind of addict whom I privately do not want in my Fellowship group?
- 3) Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?

- 4) Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
- 5) Does a celebrity impress me over? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
- 6) When someone turns up at the Fellowship needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to the Fellowship before? What his other problems are?

Tradition 4 - Principle of Autonomy

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

- 1) Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in the Fellowship?
- 2) Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of the Fellowship? Of nearby or far away groups?
- 3) Do I put down other members' behaviour when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
- 4) Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in the Fellowship, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
- 5) Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay clean?
- 6) Do I share my knowledge of the Fellowship's tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

Tradition 5 - Principle of carrying THE message

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

- 1) Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, and so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
- 2) Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of the Fellowship's help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
- 3) Have I today imposed on any Fellowship member for a special favour or consideration simply because I am a fellow addict?
- 4) Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
- 5) Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfil our primary purpose?
- 6) Do I remember that Fellowship old-timers, too, can be addicts who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

Tradition 6 - Principle of Outside enterprises

An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

- 1) Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several Fellowship beds in our local hospital?

- 2) Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
- 3) Are all the officers and members of our local club familiar with "Guidelines on Clubs"?
- 4) Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on addiction?
- 5) Some addicts will stay around in the meeting only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities

Tradition 7 - Principle of Giving it away

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

- 1) Honestly now, do I do all I can to help my group, my central office, my GSO remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when using drugs?
- 2) Should the Fellowship make a profit from its resources?
- 3) If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be okay to let the government subsidize Fellowship groups in hospitals and prisons?
- 4) Is it more important to get a big collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
- 5) Is a group treasurer's report unimportant business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
- 6) How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received

Tradition 8 - Principle of Authority

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

- 1) Is my own behaviour accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
- 2) When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
- 3) Do I sometimes try to get some reward - even if not money- for my personal efforts?
- 4) Do I try to sound like an expert on addiction? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On the Fellowship itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
- 5) Do I make an effort to understand what the Fellowship employees do? What workers in other addiction agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
- 6) In my own Fellowship life, have I any experiences, which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
- 7) Have I paid enough attention on why and how the Traditions developed?

Tradition 9 - Principle of Authority

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

- 1) Do I still try to boss things in the Fellowship?
- 2) Do I resist formal aspects of the Fellowship because I fear them as authoritative?

- 3) Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
- 4) Do I exercise patience and humility in any job I take?
- 5) Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any Fellowship work?
- 6) Why doesn't every group need a constitution and bylaws?
- 7) Have I learned to step out of a service gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
- 8) What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility

Tradition 10 - Principle of Outside issues

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

- 1) Do I ever give the impression that my Fellowship has an opinion on outside issues? Such as forms of medical treatments, other Fellowships, etc.
- 2) Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the opinion of the Fellowship?
- 3) What gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
- 4) Have I had a similar experience in my own life?
- 5) What would the Fellowship be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
- 6) Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
- 7) How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside or inside the Fellowship?

Tradition 11 - Principle of Public relations

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

- 1) Do I sometimes promote the Fellowship so fanatically that I make it seem unattractive?
- 2) Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as member?
- 3) Am I careful about throwing Fellowship member's names around?
- 4) Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, addict?
- 5) What would the Fellowship be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
- 6) Is my recovery attractive enough that a sick addict would want such a quality for himself/ herself?

Tradition 12 - Principle of Anonymity

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

- 1) Why is it good idea for me to place the common welfare of all Fellowship members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if the Fellowship as a whole disappeared?
- 2) When I do not trust the Fellowship's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?

- 3) In my opinions of and remarks about others, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay clean?
- 4) Do I ever try to get a certain group to conform to my standards, not its own?
- 5) Have I a personal responsibility in helping my group fulfil its primary purpose? What is my part?
- 6) Does my personal behaviour reflect the 12th Tradition—or belie it?
- 7) Do I do all I can do to support my Fellowship financially?
- 8) Do I complain about certain behaviour—especially if they are paid to work for the Fellowship?
- 9) Do I fulfil all my Fellowship's responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience?
- 10) Do my utterances always reflect the 12th Tradition, or do I give Fellowship critics real ammunition?
- 11) Should I keep my membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another addict (and therefore me)?
- 12) What is the real importance of me among more than a million Fellowship members?

❖ The source of the information above is derived from Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine. *These questions have been adapted from AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971.*