

**Tradition 9: “A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”**

**How was this tradition first written?**

“Alcoholics Anonymous needs the *least* possible organization.” (page 172, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

**How is it now written?**

“AA, as such, ought *never* be organized;”

**What is the exception? Or “seeming contradiction”? (page 172, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)**

“Then, in seeming contradiction, we proceed to create special service boards and committees which in themselves are organized.”

**What is the essence of organizations everywhere?**

- “Power to direct or govern is the essence of organizations everywhere.”

**How is Alcoholics Anonymous the exception? (page 173-174)**

- a. No membership rules (except Tradition 3)
- b. Cannot/does not discipline/punish its members
- c. Cannot/does not enforce obedience to necessary rules and regulations
- d. Cannot/ does not expel members
- e. Cannot/does not issue a single directive to an AA member
- f. Alcoholics cannot be dictated to individually or collectively

**What have outsiders: Churchman, psychiatrist, man on the street, said about this tradition? (page 174)**

- “They are making disobedience a virtue!”
- “Defiant brats!”
- “They must be nuts!”

**What unique characteristic (*defining aspect/feature*) of Alcoholics Anonymous have they overlooked?**

- a. Unless each AA member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant.”
- b. “His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles.”

**Does this apply to the group as well? Yes. Why? (page 174, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)**

“Unless there is approximate conformity to AA’s Twelve Traditions, the group too, can deteriorate and die.”

**Why do we of AA obey spiritual principles?**

- a. “first because we must”
- b. “Ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings.”

## What are the two “disciplinarians of AA”?

1. Great suffering
2. Great Love

“Great suffering and great love are AA’s disciplinarians; we need no others.” (page 174 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph)

## What is clear?

- a. “that we ought never name boards to govern us”
- b. “it is equally clear that we shall always need to authorize workers to serve us.”

## Where is the difference?

“It is the difference between the spirit of vested authority and the spirit of service.”

## What is the aim?

“the aim of our services is to bring sobriety within reach of all who want it.”

“Tradition Nine at first sight seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only by the spirit of service – a true fellowship.”

## Tradition 9 Checklist:

1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program – even if no one makes me do so – with a sense of responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in my AA job?
6. Why doesn’t every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully – and profit thereby – when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

## **Tradition 10: “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”**

“Never since it began has Alcoholics Anonymous been divided by a major controversial issue.”

“Nor has our fellowship ever publicly taken sides on any question in an embattled world.”

### **Old Timer wisdom:**

“Practically never have I heard a heated religious, political or reform argument among AA members. So long as we don’t argue these matters privately, it’s a cinch we never shall publicly.” AA Old-timer (page 176, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

Note: Tradition 1 Unity, Tradition 5 Primary Purpose

### **What have “we AA’s” known from the very beginning?**

“As by some deep instinct, we AA’s have known from the very beginning that we must never, no matter what the provocation, publicly take sides in any fight, even a worthy one.” (page 176, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)

### **What has “all of history” afforded us?**

- a. “the spectacle of striving nations and groups torn asunder because they were designed for, or tempted into public controversy.”
- b. “Others fell apart because of sheer self-righteousness while trying to enforce upon the rest of mankind some millennium of their own specification.”
- c. “we’ve seen millions die in political and economic wars often spurred by religious and racial differences.”
- d. “We live in the imminent possibility of a fresh holocaust to determine how men shall be governed
- e. “and how the products of nature and toil shall be divided among them.”

### **What about the individual AA member?**

“Nor does it mean that the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, now restored as citizens of the world, are going to back away from their individual responsibilities to act as they see the right upon issues of our time.”

### **Why does AA as a whole not enter into public controversy?**

- a. “...because we know that our society will perish if it does.”
- b. “We conceive the survival and spread of Alcoholics Anonymous to be something far greater importance than the weight we could collectively throw back of any other cause.
- c. “Since recovery from alcoholism is life itself to us, it is imperative that we preserve in full strength our means of survival.”

Bill’s Example: The Washingtonians

## Tradition 10 Checklist:

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an “AA opinion” on Antabuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The Federal or State government? Legalizing Marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Ala-teen?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression that I am stating the “AA opinion”?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own AA life?
5. What would AA 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 AA? Inside AA?

## Tradition 10 Long Form

- No AA group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate AA, express any opinion on outside controversial issues – particularly those of political, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion.
- The Alcoholics Anonymous group oppose no one.
- Concerning such matters, they can express no views whatever.

“We have ceased fighting anyone or anything.” Big Book page 84

**Tradition 11: “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.”**

**What has been the principal means of bringing alcoholics into our Fellowship?** (page 180, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

- a. “legion of well-wishers”
- b. “immense and favorable publicity of every description”
- c. “newspapers...”
- d. “radio program...”
- e. “moving picture...”
- f. “television...”

**Who were the “inquiring voices”?** (page 180, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)

- a. Alcoholics
- b. Families
- c. Doctors
- d. Clergymen
- e. Employers

**What great responsibility did early AA feel?** (page 180, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph)

“Therefore, a great responsibility fell upon us to develop the best possible public relations policy for Alcoholics Anonymous.”

**Instead of Marketing, Advertising and Promotion, what did we find our policy ought to be?** (page 181, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

“We found that we had to rely upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion.”

**Why?** (page 181, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)

- a. “But we do have to soberly face the fact that being in the public eye is hazardous, especially for us.”
- b. “By temperament, nearly every one of us had been an irrepressible promoter, and the prospect of a society composed almost entirely of promoters was frightening.”
- c. “Considering this explosive factor, we knew we had to exercise self-restraint.”

**When early AA exercised self-restraint, what “startling” result happened?** (page 181, last paragraph)

“It resulted in more favorable publicity of Alcoholics Anonymous than could possibly have been obtained through all the arts and abilities of AA’s best press agents.”

### What point did the press finally get?

“Here was something rare in the world – a society which said it wished to publicize its principles and its work, but not its individual members.”

### What were the “plausible arguments” of about 100 early AA’s who were breaking anonymity? (page 182)

- a. “With perfectly good intent these folks declared that the principle of anonymity was horse-and-buggy stuff.”
- b. “They were sure that AA could go faster and farther if it (AA) availed itself of modern publicity methods.”
- c. “AA, they pointed out, included many persons of local, national, or international fame. Provided that they were willing – and many were – why shouldn’t their membership be publicized, thereby encouraging others to join us?”

### What happened?

“The Foundation (GSO) wrote letters to practically every news outlet in North America, setting forth our public relations policy of attraction rather than promotion, *and emphasizing personal anonymity as AA’s greatest protection.*”

### How did the Press respond or cooperate with AA on the 11<sup>th</sup> Tradition?

“Editors and rewrite men have repeatedly deleted names and pictures of members from AA copy; frequently having reminded ambitious members of AA of AA’s anonymity policy.”

### What does Tradition 11 represent to/for us?

- a. “it represents far more than a sound public relations policy.”
- b. “it is more than a denial of self-seeking.”
- c. “This Tradition is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in AA.
- d. “In it, each member becomes an active guardian of our Fellowship.”

### Tradition 11 Checklist:

- 1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I make it seem **un**attractive?
- 2. Am I always careful to keep the confidence reposed in me as an AA member?
- 3. Am I careful about throwing AA’s name around – even within the fellowship?
- 4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
- 5. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition 11? Where would I be?
- 6. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for themselves?

**Tradition 12: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”**

**What is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions?**

“Anonymity”

**What is the spiritual substance of anonymity?** (page 184, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

“Sacrifice”

**Why?**

“Because AA’s Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit – well symbolized by anonymity – is the foundation of them all.”

**What was anonymity born of (in early days)?** (page 184, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)

“it was the child of our early fears.”

**Why were our first nameless groups of alcoholics a secret society?** (page 184)

1. “The bare hint of publicity, even for our work, shocked us.”
2. “Though ex-drinkers, we still thought we had to hide from public distrust and contempt.”
3. “It is important that we remain anonymous because we are too few, at present, to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals which may result from this publication.”

**What happened as the AA groups multiplied?** (page 185)

Our anonymity problems multiplied too.

**What was our first lesson in the practical application of anonymity?**

“Clearly, every AA member’s name – and story too – had to be confidential, if he wished.”

Bill’s example: of discussing another member’s intimate and harrowing aspects of his case. Broken trust.

**What did our growth make plain?**

“that we couldn’t be a secret society”

“but equally plain that we couldn’t be a vaudeville circuit, either”

### How anonymous should an AA member be?

“At this altitude (press, radio, films and television) anonymity – 100 percent anonymity – was the only possible answer.”

“Here, principles would have to come before personalities, without exception.”

### What had these experience taught us about Anonymity?

- a. “that anonymity is real humility at work.”
- b. “It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes AA life everywhere.”
- c. “Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as AA members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public.”
- d. “As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole Society and under which we grow and work in unity.”

### What is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have? (page 187, last sentence)

“Humility expressed by Anonymity”

### Tradition 12 Checklist:



1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare?  
What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When do I not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinion of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to confirm to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition – or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AAs behavior – especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million AAs?

### **Tradition 12 Long Form**

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