

Traditions Checklist

AA GRAPEVINE

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*These questions * were originally published in Grapevine in conjunction with a series of articles on the Twelve Traditions that ran from November 1969 to September 1971. While they were originally intended as suggestions for individual use, many AA groups have since adopted them and use them as a basis for wider discussion.*

Tradition One:

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

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person? Am I sometimes divisive? Do I ever gossip or take another member's inventory?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I foster arguments with statements such as "just for the sake of discussion"?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I sometimes abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I ever put down some AA activities for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support AA as a whole in every way I can, or just the parts that I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?

Tradition Two:

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 officers, AA committees and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibilities?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs, praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I often feel the need to "save face" in group discussions, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn with AA chores?
6. Do I complain about the decisions that my group makes, even though I do not attend the business meetings where these decisions are made?

Tradition Three:

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

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as those who likely will not make it?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately or publicly do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or not?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, sexual identity or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity, 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 AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what they do for a living? Where they live? What their domestic arrangements are? Whether they have been to AA before? What their other problems are?

(* revised July 2018)

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Tradition Four:

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

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group consider the welfare of nearby groups in its actions and decisions? Of AA “as a whole”?
3. Do I judge or criticize other members’ behavior 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 AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—their lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I ever criticize certain groups because I think they don’t do things how I believe AA should be done?

Tradition Five:

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

1. Am I willing to firmly explain to newcomers the limitations of AA help, even though they may get mad at me for not giving them a loan? Or dating advice? Or help with a job?
2. Have I ever imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
3. Am I willing to Twelfth-Step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
4. Do I help my group in every way to fulfill our primary purpose?
5. Do I remember that AA long-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?
6. Does our group ever use money from the basket for dinners or events or for memorials for members who have passed on?

Tradition Six:

An AA 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. Why is it important that we not get involved in outside enterprises?
2. Is it ever wise for a group to lease a small building or endorse an outside event?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local clubhouse familiar with “Guidelines on Clubs,” which is available free from GSO?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor’s advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Our group’s landlord is raising money to pay for a new roof on the building. Should the group make a contribution? What if the landlord specifically asks the group to make a contribution?

Tradition Seven:

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

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new person who can’t afford it yet? How generous was I when drunk in a barroom?
2. How do I (or my group) support our International Journals of Alcoholics Anonymous, Grapevine and La Viña?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn’t it be OK to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important for a group to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer’s report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. Does my group have a “prudent reserve”? If yes, do I know what that amount is?
7. If a family member, work colleague or close friend who is not an AA member wants to make a financial contribution to my group, should the group accept it? What if my group is short on funds?

Traditions Checklist

Tradition Eight:

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

1. Does my own behavior accurately mirror 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 AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. Do I know where my local meeting directory comes from?
7. In my own AA life, have I had any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
8. Have I read the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*? How about the pamphlet “A.A. Tradition—How It Developed”.
9. Can my group rely on me to fulfill my service responsibilities without someone checking on me?

Tradition Nine:

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

1. Do I try to “boss” things in AA?
2. Do I ever resist formal aspects of AA because I see them as authoritative?
3. Do I try to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal 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 any 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 Ten:

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

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an “AA opinion” on doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? Prescribed medications? Other drugs? Other 12-Step programs? Vitamins? Al-Anon? The federal or state government?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression that I'm stating the “AA opinion”?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
5. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
6. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?
7. Should the meeting secretary intervene to remind AA members about this Tradition if a member starts criticizing one political party compared to others or favoring a religion over others?

Traditions Checklist

Tradition Eleven:

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 AA so fanatically that I might make it seem unattractive?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences shared with me as an AA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing AA members' names 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 Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Am I careful not to identify myself or others as members of AA when I post certain things on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram?
7. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?
8. If my group has its own website, have we considered this Tradition when we designed it, how accessible it is, and the type of content that it offers?

Tradition Twelve:

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

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 I do not trust or agree with AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, do I imply that membership requirements go beyond the desire to stay sober?
4. Have I a personal responsibility to help an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
5. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially?
6. 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 attractive so that other drunks might want it?
7. What does anonymity mean to me?
8. In light of increased awareness of alcoholism and AA's program of recovery among the general public, why is the principle of anonymity still important?
9. Am I mindful to respect the anonymity of other AA members who may work in my place of employment or my industry? How about AA members who live in my area or neighborhood?
10. What does "principles before personalities" mean to me?