

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

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

Practice These Principles...

Tradition One: 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 A.A. remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting A.A. in one place with A.A. in another?
5. Do I put down some A.A. activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of A.A.?
6. Am I informed about A.A. as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, A.A. as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of A.A. 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 A.A. meetings or read enough A.A. literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with A.A. all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

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, A.A. committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with A.A. Twelfth Step jobs or other A.A. responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my A.A. jobs? Praise for my A.A. 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 sober for a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at A.A. chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

Tradition Three: The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new A.A. members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my A.A. 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. Am I over-impressed by a celebrity? 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 A.A. 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 A.A. before? What his other problems are?

Tradition Four: 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 A.A.?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of A.A.? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Africa? Or Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
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 A.A., 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 sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of A.A. tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Traditions doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the *limitations* of A.A. help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any A.A. member for a special favour or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
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 A.A. old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

Tradition Six: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. 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 A.A. 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 for A.A.'s 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?

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

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help A.A. (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 tanked in a barroom?
2. Should the Regmaker sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it could make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full colour, at a cheaper price per copy?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be okay to let the government subsidize A.A. groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important to get a big A.A. collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer's report unimportant A.A. business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. How important in my recovery is the felling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?

Tradition Eight: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centres 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 A.A. efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in A.A. like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On A.A. itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on *humility*?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what A.A. employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own A.A. life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of the Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? To the pamphlet AA Tradition – How It Developed?

Tradition Nine: 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 A.A.?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of A.A. because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the A.A. program – even if no one makes me do so – with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any A.A. job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any A.A. job?
6. Why doesn't every A.A. group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an A.A. 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 A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an "AA opinion" on Antabuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Alateen?

2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the “A.A. opinion”?
3. What in A.A. history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own A.A. life?
5. What would A.A. 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 A.A.? Inside A.A.?

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 A.A. so fanatically that I make it seem *unattractive*?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as an A.A. member?
3. Am I careful about throwing A.A. names around – even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
5. What would A.A. be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Is my A.A. sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?

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 A.A. members before individual welfare? What would happen to *me* if A.A. as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust A.A.’s current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other A.A.s, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain A.A. group to conform to *my* standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an A.A. group fulfil its primary purpose? What is *my* part?
6. Does my personal behaviour reflect the Sixth Tradition – or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support A.A. financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Regmaker subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain A.A.’s behaviour – especially if they are paid to work for A.A.? Who made *me* so smart?
9. Do I fulfil all A.A. 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 A.A. critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my A.A. membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of A.A. so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million A.A.s?