

## ***Traditions and Service: it's an inside-out process      Workshop 2016***

*"Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: What! You too?  
I thought I was the only one." C.S. Lewis*

Unlike the "Traditions" in Fiddler on the Roof, which were about Not Changing how things are done, RECOVERY traditions are powerful tools of change. For example, Relationships. In Nar-Anon, we practice relationship principles differently. As we recover from this family disease, we learn to develop respectful, loving, supportive, and safe relationships. This is in spite of our struggles. In a sense we are following the example of the loving father from "Fiddler on the Roof" who was able to set aside his "TRADITIONS" which were written in stone in his mind, in order to keep his relationships with those whom he loved; his children and his wife. When we respectfully practice the Nar-Anon traditions and those principles of recovery imbedded within them, a loving unity is created in our relationships. Care and compassion pull us together, rather than pushing us apart. We work the steps to steady our hearts, to connect with a Higher Power and to heal ourselves. We work the traditions to bring healing to each other. Practicing these spiritual, respectful principles in the safety of the group, we learn to first accept, and then embrace our powerlessness. Our group when functioning within the unenforceable traditions becomes a safe place to start. We witness the power of the program at work, and our hope turns into the courage to change. We learn to listen before speaking, and be there for each other, which is enough.

### ***Tradition One***

***Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity***

Unity - we often sit in a circle - no one is greater than or less than another; each occupying their own place- we make up the whole together – as a group we are able to expand and contract while maintaining our personal space and individuality- we learn to be, all of us, together while all are truly unique. It is in our similarities that we find Nar-anon a safe place to be, to speak; it is in our differences that we are able to share our experiences and help others through sharing the living out of our recovery. Those in the rooms are always invited to take what they need and leave the rest.

- All equal none more important than another
- All have story to share
- All experiences are learning opportunities
- All have common experiences and new perspectives; growth and focus draws our group together

### ***Tradition Two***

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

Step 1-3 - all in this tradition

- Powerlessness over each other
- Trust the process is being guided- gut feelings of compassion and care for group; not fear or care taking motives
- Let go of our self- will and the results to our Higher Power who is our authority and guide for the decision right now

Connection with Spiritual

- Evidence of connection are loving caring, respectful service without control- learning to be lead, trusting enough to go with flow of circumstances.
- Leadership that is not pushy, authoritative, or disrespectful of others thoughts and ideas
- Value one another: all thoughts expressed: it is important to hear all perspectives for the common welfare of group
- A spirit of open mindedness - serve from our hearts motivated by gratitude not because we know all the answers
- Decisions; sometimes in my recovery decisions are made from listening and a deep knowing of when something is not in harmony with the spiritual recovery principles rather than there being a perfect crystal clear solution; a now focus not obsessed with results.

### **Tradition 5**

***Each Nar-Anon Family Group has but one purpose; to help families of addicts. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon, by encouraging and understanding our addicted relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of addicts.***

How do we help? This is the love tradition. It is the cascading effect of recovery on me, and in me; as it always does in my recovery, it begins with me...

The progression of our purpose overflows from our own personal recovery and growth process

- We practice the 12 steps to heal and learn to know ourselves; humbly accept out humanity- experience the comfort and compassion of the program. We share throughout the progression of our own recoveries. Steps 4-9
- Encourage and understand: changed attitudes rooted in knowledge and compassion- knowledge and understanding of powerlessness regarding the disease of addiction and what it does to us all.
- Unconditional love and acceptance breaks down the walls of isolation- welcome and comfort without shame and blame is offered here. Attraction is experienced when we practice trust and cultivate calm in all our affairs. The love and grace of the program overflows in the rooms of recovery as we learn a new way to be with others.

**The single most important act of service I will ever do in my recovery is to share my recovery and new peaceful, connected perspective with another suffering soul. I keep coming back and I open my mouth and share what my recovery has done in me. I humbly accept that I and others are fellow travelers on a common path with unique stories where we need to be today. I learn to let other be. Together we learn to connect with our higher power and others as our lives unfold.**

### **Tradition Six**

***Our Family Groups ought never to endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim; but although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Narcotics Anonymous.***

Maintenance, steps 10-12 are about staying connected spiritually to our Higher Power and having our recovery overflow into the lives of others in service beginning in our home group when we share.

- Warning about losing focus of what is really important, what draws us close to support, care and be there for one another
- Recovery has a primary spiritual aim- what that does for us together isn't mine to determine or judge- what does it mean to the whole if we as a group consider the spiritual something vital to us all. This program is about healing hearts and relationships- our own which in turn overflows our healing, courage, and experiences into the lives of others. Recovery begins with my willingness to learn to be before doing- we steal each other's courage to learn to be – to center ourselves - to learn to listen to our Higher Power and our own trusting connected, not fearing hearts, for guidance. Help, healing, wisdom, guidance- calmness is trust with a face on.
- Service: when I am trying to serve 'out of control,' I keep bumping up against powerlessness- mine, over other people and circumstances - when I serve out of a 'trust' place I ask for guidance do my part and let the situation unfold. I step back and with the perspective of time and experience I learn to see my HP being involved in the whole. The what, or how is not so important.

I learn that to judge disrespects another's soul and spirit and we are mired in fear and hurt. We learn to respect our own timelines and no longer need to be anywhere but where we are today; connected and growing not stuck or despairing anymore. We extend that acceptance to each other. "Before you knew me you expressed longing for me in hurtful ways. You were ever so vulnerable to the evil around you in the world. But now my presence safely shields you, enfolding you in my loving arms. I have lifted you out of darkness into my glorious light." Sarah Young. With our Higher Power we are so much lighter inside, we become changed and aware we are never alone to go through our lives. In life, there are struggles, but inside I am or will be ok. I learn to steady my heart and that steadiness creates calm- we become an oasis for each other, together.

Keep focusing on this spiritual program 'our primary spiritual aim', applying the spiritual principles in all of our affairs. Recovery helps me slow down, requires me to slow down because it is so much easier for most of us to be human doings rather than human beings but that does not nurture our souls.

- How have you learned to be there for others, how have you learned to be there for yourself?
- How did it feel to realize the addict was powerless over their addiction? Was it hard to accept? Did it affect my perspective on our relationship?-
- How have you learned to practice acceptance, or recognize when you need to?  
What is your clue that your life is becoming unmanageable?
- Do you rotate leadership or service positions in your group?
- How have you experienced powerlessness in service, what did you do?
- How do you be ok when you do not know what the future holds?
- How do you welcome and not overwhelm the person who is desperately involved in another's circumstances?