Tradition 7:  "Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

We give back to the program through money and time so that Nar-Anon is still there to help others in need.

We help financially by paying rent and other family group expenses and purchasing literature.  We also contribute to the Midwest Region and the World Service Office to help new groups get started and to send our delegates, with our voting results, to the World Service Conference.

We give of our time by setting up and cleaning up the meeting room, taking part in committee work, holding a service position at the group, regional or world service level, or talking with a struggling newcomer after a meeting.

We decline outside contributions because we want no expectations from others.  We are a politically independent and self-governing organization.

It is common for newcomers to wonder where the money in the basket goes.  Sometimes, that curiosity will lead to service work or our family group's interest in and relationship to the larger fellowship of Nar-Anon.  The family group treasurer keeps transparent financial records that are available for any group member to review.   Good practices promote goodwill.

All groups are autonomous and vary widely.  Groups don't just hold meetings.  Some have refreshments.  Some give out welcome or newcomer packets.  Some give bookmarks, medallions, or other "gifts" for anniversaries or other accomplishments.  There are groups that have celebrations, host retreats, invite guest speakers for a speaker jam breakfast, plan holiday get togethers and any number of other events.

Some groups pay for literature for all members out of their treasury.  In other groups, desired literature is ordered and paid for by the individual through the WSO website.

There are groups that donate to Midwest Region and the World Service Office and others that do not.  While most groups practice maintaining a prudent reserve of funds, and contributing their excess, others continue to grow their treasuries well beyond the needs of their groups.

What does this tell us?  That the world is not fair?  No one ever said it was.  Welcome to the spiritual principles of humility, integrity and tolerance.

There are two instructions in tradition 7.  The first, ...ought to be self supporting... is conditional.  There are times, especially in the beginning, when a group needs financial assistance.  The second instruction ...declining outside contributions... is absolute.  If your group meets in a free facility, do you provide a donation towards the building expenses?  Do you contribute in some other way, such as labor or cleaning?

Every interaction we have with the public is a reflection on Nar-Anon as a whole.  Our message to the public is clear.  We are not part of the welfare system.  We are not part of any higher institution.  We are not asking for donations or grants.  We are committed, not to our meeting rooms, but to each other.  Nar-Anon exists to help families who are suffering due to the addiction problem of their loved one.  We are uncompromising in our practices.  What began as a few scattered groups is now a worldwide fellowship.

Self-supporting is taking responsibility for ourselves and our decisions.  When we make a choice, we accept the consequences.  As many of us have learned with boundaries, we do not have to keep making the same choices.  By being open-minded and willing, we can make a different choice that may lead to a better outcome.

Self-supporting also means to remove the mantel of helplessness and defeat that brought us through the doors of Nar-Anon and accept that we can make changes in our lives.  While it may take time and trial and error to find our way, with help from our Higher Power and the loving support of our friends and family in Nar-Anon, we can and do recover.  Peace in mind, body and spirit is possible.

Q.  How do I apply this tradition of self-support in my everyday life with friends, family, coworkers, strangers?

Q.  How has my contributions of money, time, energy, creativity, conversation, thought and personal practices changed since I began in Nar-Anon?

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SESH p199, Guiding Principles p120-123