


# **Our Traditions**

## **Principles for Groups and Beyond**

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## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

**Our group experience suggests that the unity of the Nar-Anon Family Groups depends upon our adherence to these traditions.**

In most organizations there are rules and regulations to keep order. In Nar-Anon we have no rules, but rather a set of spiritual principles that guide us in a way no rules or regulations can. It requires dedication without reserve or self-will. These principles are effective because members are willing to be devoted to the practice and application of our spiritual tools.

Some members think the traditions cannot be applied until completing the steps, or that they are only for service members. Other members believe they are more important for recovering addicts. Many an argument, disagreement, or debate in our rooms, service boards, and committees can be resolved by applying the principles in these traditions. Beyond the rooms of Nar-Anon, we learn to incorporate the traditions in our personal lives. We eventually learn to apply these principles with others who have no knowledge of twelve step programs. The steps are for personal recovery, and the traditions are for our relationships with others, including our groups.

The traditions were written to fulfill a need for a set of spiritual principles that allow people from all social, religious, economic, and political backgrounds to come together for one purpose, to recover from the effects of someone else's addiction. We soon learn to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs. The program allows everyone to be on an even playing field as equals. By coming together we achieve so much with no one person being right or wrong.

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

When we first came to Nar-Anon, common welfare and unity were not terms to which we could relate. The chaos that engulfed our lives was as far away from these terms as life could get. We lived in turmoil, something familiar to many of us. Before entering the rooms of Nar-Anon, we might have argued, manipulated, and controlled many aspects of our relationships. Once we started working the program, with the help of a sponsor and other members of our group, we learned a new way to live and a new way to react to others around us.

We may have thought we put others above ourselves, and maybe we did, but at some point putting others first became a chore we no longer liked and even began to resent. The First Tradition is now asking us to think of everyone else. Haven't we done this enough? How or why would we want to practice Tradition One?

Tradition One starts with the word "our"; it does not begin with "I." This tradition is asking us to think about more than just ourselves. With the help of a sponsor, while working the steps, we learn how to take care of ourselves. If we continue to think only of ourselves and what we want, how will that affect our meetings? We certainly do not like it when the addicts think only of themselves, so we can understand why we need to practice Tradition One. We learn how to work with each other during regular and group business meetings. We listen to each other and think about what is best for the group as a whole, not just our personal needs.

Our common welfare refers to the health, happiness, and unity of our groups. We want our fellowship to grow and be a place where people find the help they need. We have to ask ourselves questions when it comes to the health and well-being of our meetings. Do we use only conference approved literature? Members may be confused by the reading of outside literature, which sends a mixed message. Do we limit our sharing time to allow everyone the opportunity to share during the meeting? Do we welcome the newcomer and explain how the meetings are conducted? When we allow members to share for an extended amount of time, are we neglecting other members who may be struggling? How do these things affect the common welfare of the group?

Many confuse the term unity with being unanimous, thinking we have to agree all the time. The point of unity is to have a common purpose, which is our recovery. Tradition One asks us to think about how the group decisions we make affect others, even those who have yet to find these rooms.

### **Key Words or Phrases**

Common Welfare  
Unity  
Personal Progress

### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Anonymity  
Humility  
Open-mindedness  
Willingness

### **Study Questions**

1. What does unity mean to me?
2. How is unity different from uniformity?
3. How do I benefit by putting the welfare of others above my own?
4. How can we put the common welfare of the group before the needs of one individual?
5. How can limiting our sharing, so others have time to share, benefit the health and welfare of the group?
6. How do I help newcomers feel welcome?
7. How can using the *Group Inventory* (S-316) help promote group unity?

***Tradition Two: For our group purposes 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***

Those new to Nar-Anon might look around for a leader, someone who runs the meeting. Unlike most organizations, Nar-Anon has no hierarchy or chain of command, someone to tell others what to do or how and when to do it. We have leaders, but they do not govern. They do not rule the group; instead, these leaders serve. This is a new and confusing concept. It is not until we have been attending meetings, have heard the traditions read repeatedly, and studied them, that we are able to consider the principles behind them. We learn we are equals in Nar-Anon; we each have a voice.

What is a group conscience, and how does it work? A group conscience is when we listen and share with one another as equals, seeking our Higher Powers' will for the group. It is more than a vote. We know our inner conscience speaks to us, and we know when things do not feel right. We respectfully listen to the thoughts, perspectives, and ideas of others. We seek to make decisions with the help of our Higher Power, based on spiritual principles and our concern for the common welfare of the group. This binds us together in unity of purpose. It is important that all ideas are heard and respectfully considered before decisions are made. We may not all agree, but we accept the decision of the group. We seek not our will, but our Higher Power's will for the group.

Longtime members may suggest we utilize the Nar-Anon principles and service guides to find answers to our common problems. We listen to all members share their experience and opinions, especially those different from our own. We consider all pertinent information, not rushing to make a decision if one is not needed right away. Often a member may want to call their sponsor or service sponsor before voting. By cultivating loving, open, respectful discussion we promote an atmosphere of serenity where our Higher Power can help us find effective solutions to issues. We announce the need for discussion on topics in advance to give members the opportunity to participate. It would not be fair to make decisions without the representation of our regular members.

Cliques form easily. Members who have attended for many years may have developed friendships, and it is common for friends to agree. It is crucial to protect the lone voices in the decision-making process. When we stifle the voice of the member who may disagree with everyone else, we may not always get the best solution. Dominant personalities can often control the outcome. It is easier to give in than to stand up and cause conflict. It is helpful for longtime members to remind the group to give equal consideration to all members.

When considering trusted servants, we aim to elect those with the knowledge or willingness to apply the principles of Nar-Anon. If a member needs help becoming familiar with the principles, longtime members can guide or mentor them. When we select trusted servants with minimal knowledge of the principles, and we don't mentor them, we are doing them and the fellowship a disservice. We must ask ourselves whether we are selecting the right person for the job. Is it better to leave a position vacant than elect a member who is unable to fulfill the commitment?

### Key Words or Phrases

Group conscience  
Trusted Servants

### Unspoken Spiritual Principles

Anonymity  
Respect  
Humility

### Study Questions

1. How does the God of my understanding from Step Three apply in Tradition Two?
2. What is the difference between a group conscience and a group vote?
3. When was the last time your group took a group conscience? Was everyone given the opportunity to speak?
4. How can we assure the group is given adequate time for members to consider their choices and contributions?
5. Explain the difference between service leadership in Nar-Anon and leadership outside the Nar-Anon fellowship.
6. How can we keep dominant personalities from controlling the outcome of a group conscience?
7. How can we respect the lone voice even when we disagree?
8. What qualities do we look for when selecting trusted servants?

***Tradition Three: The relatives of addicts, when gathered for mutual aid, may call themselves a Nar-Anon Family Group, provided that as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of addiction in a relative or friend.***

We come to Nar-Anon and find people like ourselves whose lives have been affected by the addiction of a relative or friend. We relate to each other because we have had similar experiences. We extend the hand of fellowship with unconditional love and acceptance to anyone who is troubled by someone else's addiction. When a newcomer attends our meeting, it is important that they find understanding, safety, and a focus on recovery. This gives us the freedom to attend any Nar-Anon meeting in the world with the assurance it will abide by the traditions of Nar-Anon. Our message is not diluted by affiliation with other programs, treatment centers, religions, or politics.

After coming for some time, we get to know each other and find we have similar beliefs and interests. Members may choose to spend time together outside the meeting and share other

interests. However, we cannot bring outside interests into our Nar-Anon room. New members may be excited to find people with energy to fight the war on addiction and rally the voices together. During our meetings, we must remind members that we have no other affiliations. Sometimes members want to bring flyers from other fellowships or treatment centers. These can be shared outside the meeting; inside the room we keep the focus on Nar-Anon recovery. As long as we call ourselves a Nar-Anon Family Group, we agree to follow the principles of the program.

In our recovery, we learn we cannot be all things to all people. Discussion of religions, other recovery programs, or causes could be interpreted as an affiliation. This could divert us from helping those who are affected by someone else's addiction. The same is true for our meetings. We may meet in a treatment center or church, but we should carefully consider the group's name, so it does not appear we are affiliated with them. When we are pursuing other interests in public, even with another member of Nar-Anon, we must not associate Nar-Anon with those interests.

This tradition reminds us that the only requirement for membership in Nar-Anon is a problem of addiction in a relative or friend. Once someone is affected by the addiction of another, the impact can never be erased. The relationship to the addict does not matter when we gather together for mutual aid. Some might wonder why a member still attends after divorce, death, or when the addict is in recovery. We attend meetings for our recovery.

### **Key Words or Phrases**

Mutual aid

Affiliation

Requirement for membership

As a group

### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Anonymity

Humility

Equality

### **Study Questions**

1. Describe the qualifications for membership in Nar-Anon.
2. What problems can arise when we mention other programs or treatment centers during our meeting?
3. Why do we refrain from naming our group after our meeting facility?
4. How would you explain why the group cannot affiliate with outside entities?

***Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other Nar-Anon Family Groups, or NA as a whole.***

Tradition Four is probably one of the most misinterpreted principles. Many groups and committees do not fully understand how making changes can affect other Nar-Anon Family Groups. Group autonomy does not give groups authority to change what all groups have in common, such as: rewriting the steps, changing God to Higher Power, developing their own literature, or using outside literature. In fact, the tradition speaks absolutely against doing any of these things. Each group can be autonomous in everything that does not affect other Nar-Anon groups. Members

often attend meetings while traveling or on vacation. It can be confusing when we walk into a meeting that is not reading the same steps read in our weekly meeting. A newcomer trying to find a home group who walks into a meeting that is using outside literature can be confused. A meeting may be the only oasis in the sometimes turbulent circumstances of our lives. Knowing what to expect helps our members feel safe. When we carry a consistent message of recovery and hope, follow the principles of the program, and use conference approved literature, we can call ourselves a Nar-Anon Family Group.

Over what do the groups have autonomy? Each group can decide the length of the meeting, the location, whether to serve coffee and refreshments, and which conference approved literature to read. The group may decide to change the suggested format to reserve time for newcomers to share at the end of the meeting. Some groups may decide that a member must attend meetings for six months before they can act as chair. Some groups choose to use the Serenity Prayer, other CAL, or a moment of silence to close the meeting. If our suggestions have the potential to affect other Nar-Anon Family Groups, we should give such actions careful consideration. Each group will have its own flavor developed from the spirit of its members.

Some members do not understand that NA is not affiliated with Nar-Anon. Our Sixth Tradition mentions cooperation with NA; their traditions do not mention Nar-Anon. We are not a sister fellowship to NA or any other twelve step fellowship. Although some service bodies hold events in cooperation with NA, we should be careful to respect the principles of both fellowships. While groups are autonomous, they should be careful never to do anything that negatively affects NA.

Service committees may think they have autonomy in how they provide their service in Nar-Anon. Concept Two states, "The final responsibility and authority for the Nar-Anon services rests with the Nar-Anon Family Groups." Service committees make decisions on behalf of the groups; and they are responsible to the groups. Only the groups have autonomy. We learn in the concepts how the service structure works and how each level is authorized by the groups to carry out their work. Tradition Four begins with "Each group..." never mentioning service boards or committees.

In our meetings, we carry the message of recovery. We learn to use the tools of the Nar-Anon program to strive for a deeper understanding of ourselves. Our groups are free to decide on the meeting format, topics, and conference approved readings. By focusing on the steps, traditions, and Nar-Anon recovery literature, we do not dilute the program or create confusion. Groups are the basic building blocks of Nar-Anon. It is important we respect the boundaries of the program. It is with humility and gratitude that we submit to the traditions and concepts of service.

### **Key Words or Phrases**

Autonomous

Group Autonomy

Matters Affecting

Nar-Anon/NA as a whole

### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Unity

Fellowship

Anonymity



## Study Questions

1. How does our group explain autonomy?
2. What actions can our group take to practice autonomy without affecting other groups?
3. What are areas that affect other groups of Nar-Anon?
4. What might a Nar-Anon group do that would affect NA as a whole?
5. Why do service committees not have autonomy?

***Tradition Five: 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.***

When we get to Tradition Five we discover the primary purpose of Nar-Anon, to help families of addicts. Some members might be confused about what Nar-Anon is and what the fellowship has to offer. The Fifth Tradition is clear as to how to carry out our primary purpose. This means we do not discuss addiction counselors, intervention methods, religions, other programs, or therapies. We are not here to find out how the addict thinks nor to help the addict find recovery. How do we help families of addicts? We help families of addicts by encouraging them to use the tools of the program, learn the principles, find a sponsor, practice the twelve steps, and recover one day at a time.

Tradition Five describes three ways to carry out our primary purpose. The first is by practicing the steps of Nar-Anon. Why is this so important? By working the steps, getting a sponsor, and fearlessly looking at ourselves, we learn how to let go of the things that are not ours to control. We learn how to right our wrongs. We learn to trust in a power greater than ourselves, whatever that power may be. We simply work the steps ourselves and share our experience, strength, and hope of what worked or did not work for us. We offer others the opportunity to decide if our program is right for them.

The second way, encouraging and understanding our addicted relatives, is one of the more difficult tasks in our principles. We may think we are encouraging them because we love them and have their best interests at heart. We begin to understand we cannot change them by manipulating, enabling, or rescuing. The disease and its consequences are not eliminated by our will and controlling ways. We realize addicts have choices and need to find their own Higher Power and path to recovery. Facing the consequences of using is a lesson in recovery.

Encouraging the addict is not to be confused with enabling. Encouragement may mean giving them a ride to a meeting, listening without judgment, or simply enjoying a day together. Encouraging may be as simple as trusting them to make their own decisions.

Welcoming and giving comfort to families and friends of addicts is the third way we practice the Fifth Tradition. We give back what was so freely given to us with no expectations. We may have been greeted at our first meeting with a smile, a hello, or a hug. We offer newcomers the same greetings. We may offer to share our book with another member during the meeting. For some, the greatest comfort was that others listened and validated that we were not alone. The understanding nod from across the room lets the person sharing know they are being heard and they matter.

### Key Words or Phrases

One purpose  
Practicing the Twelve Steps  
Encouraging and Understanding  
Welcoming and Giving Comfort

### Unspoken Spiritual Principles

Humility  
Service  
Anonymity

### Study Questions

1. When I went to my first meeting, what made me feel most welcome?
2. In what ways can I be helpful to other members?
3. How does our group welcome and give comfort to families and friends of addicts?
4. How does practicing the Twelve Steps set an example for newcomers?
5. How does changing ourselves through working the Steps as individuals help the group?
6. How do I differentiate between enabling and encouraging my addicted relatives?
7. How can I be encouraging in my words and actions when I am with my addicted loved one(s)?
8. How can understanding my addicted loved one(s) help me in my recovery?
9. How can a group inventory help the group in carrying out the primary purpose of Tradition Five?
10. How can we keep the meeting focused on our primary purpose?

***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.***

Tradition Six reminds us that supporting and endorsing outside enterprises can divert us from our primary purpose, to help families and friends of addicts. When we carry several messages, we can't possibly carry an effective Nar-Anon message.

In Tradition Three our groups are reminded to refrain from having other affiliations. Tradition Six expands on this and gives us clear direction. When the group endorses or lends its name to outside enterprises, it begins to shift the focus away from Nar-Anon's primary spiritual aim. By keeping a spiritual focus we do not lose sight of our own recovery process.

Outside organizations and institutions, though worthy causes, do not carry Nar-Anon's message nor do they understand our traditions. When we associate ourselves with outside causes or institutions, we cannot know how it might be perceived by others. What if an organization we were involved with was a source of controversy? Would those who consider attending Nar-Anon have second thoughts? We are free on our own time to support whatever causes we find important, never bringing those causes into our meetings.

Our outreach and public relations efforts depend on members carrying the message through health fairs and other public events. We look at each event and see if it will reach those who need us most. While health fairs can reach professionals in the treatment and therapy fields, craft fairs are not the proper place to carry the Nar-Anon message. Our group may be asked to pay a fee to set up a table or a booth. Paying the fee is being self-supporting. We must avoid the appearance of affiliation by allowing the event organizers to use our logo on a banner, t-shirt, or flyer.

Our Sixth Tradition is clear about how we handle our finances. Although some groups may have an abundance of Seventh Tradition funds, we should never finance any outside cause, no matter how worthy. Concept Eleven reminds us our group funds are used to further our primary purpose, to help families and friends of addicts. Many levels of Nar-Anon need funds to function or even to exist. If we support other causes, we leave our own service structure short of the monies needed to help Nar-Anon.

Endorsing or lending Nar-Anon's name to any outside enterprise could come at a price too large for us to pay. We could be getting involved in practices that would result in damage to Nar-Anon as a whole. As members of Nar-Anon, we should always consider the Nar-Anon name a special gift to be passed on in a positive light for those yet to find our fellowship. During a meeting treatment centers, religions, philosophies, politics, civil rights, current news, or other causes should never be endorsed, no matter how prestigious or worthy. When we cross lines in our meeting, we create dissension and division that can destroy our groups. This is why we only bring Nar-Anon CAL into our meetings. It's a simple request that during the duration of our meeting we leave all our other beliefs outside the room. We are welcome to pick them up as soon as we leave. Nar-Anon has a unique spiritual principle that can be destroyed by outside controversy. The value of one member helping another through sharing of experience, strength, and hope is what our program has to offer.

The implied spirit of the Sixth Tradition is to cooperate with Narcotics Anonymous whenever possible and respect NA as a whole. We must be careful in approaching NA communities when planning events. In many areas or regions NA may reach out to Nar-Anon. In other communities NA members may see cooperation as affiliation, and we would be wise to respect their views, not forcing an unwanted relationship. Cooperating with NA may be having a room or table at an NA convention, and we can work out the details to remain self-supporting. As fellows in recovery we should appreciate NA's traditions.

Recovery meetings should always be a safe place. Well-meaning members have businesses and lives beyond Nar-Anon. We should always leave our professions outside the fellowship. Some members of Nar-Anon are from professional fields such as counselors, medical professionals, or law enforcement agents. We must remember that we are all equal in recovery. If we know a member is of a helping profession, we must remember they are here to receive the same help we are and not inundate them with questions relating to their profession. We do the group a disservice when we allow one member to become the professional in the room. We learn to leave all our degrees and certifications at work.

We should never use our group to endorse our personal outside enterprises. Contact information should not be used to sell or promote any products or services. Abusing this information can result in loss of members who do not care to be solicited as a result of attending Nar-Anon.

Sometimes groups look at Seventh Tradition funds as an abundance of money that can be used for causes outside of Nar-Anon. Some members have shared that group money was used for an after-meeting pizza party, flowers for a member who had passed, or other causes such as treatment centers. While it is tempting to use our funds for such events, this is not in keeping with our Sixth Tradition. We must ask ourselves, when we spend our Seventh Tradition funds, how does this further our primary purpose.

### **Key Words or Phrases**

Endorse, finance or lend our Name

Outside enterprises

Divert

Cooperation with NA

Primary spiritual aim

Principles above personalities

### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Anonymity

### **Study Questions**

1. Why is it important that I not share my outside interests during the meeting?
2. If members share something that I feel is against Tradition Six, how can I respond to them?
3. In what ways can the family group spread the word of Nar-Anon to those in need without compromising Tradition Six?
4. How can our fellowship educate members on why we shouldn't endorse, finance or lend our name to outside causes?
5. How can money, property, or prestige divert my home group from our primary focus?

6. What problems can arise when we endorse other programs or treatment centers during our meeting?

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

The Seventh Tradition goes beyond the dollars in the basket. This tradition speaks to every aspect of our program. Our purpose as a Nar-Anon group is to help families of addicts. We support ourselves. Our program encompasses the steps, traditions, and concepts. These have been written, accepted, and approved as our principles and guidelines. When a group is formed it accepts the responsibility of being self-supporting based on these principles and guidelines. This means we support our groups, areas, regions, world services, and Nar-Anon as a whole according to group conscience. Support comes from within the fellowship in the form of finances, service in our groups, outreach, and carrying the message.

Tradition Seven keeps Nar-Anon independent. We do not apply for grants, solicit funds, or obtain materials from outside sources. In this way, Nar-Anon remains self-supporting. Accepting money, literature, information, or professional support from outsiders can lead to the idea that we are in their debt. We do not want our decisions to be based on any outside influences. We want to be able to support ourselves and be in control of our finances and the decisions we make to fulfill our primary purpose.

When a group is struggling, it is tempting to think of inventive ways to raise funds to help carry the message. Activities or fundraisers may be held within the fellowship to raise funds for a specific need such as public outreach, sending a delegate to the World Service Conference, or a convention. Nar-Anon does not have telethons to raise money from those outside of its membership like other causes and organizations. We do not accept outside contributions, monetary or otherwise. This is a member-supported organization which provides the needed services and materials through members' contributions and service.

In the beginning, we borrowed literature from another fellowship changing the words to reflect the effects of addiction. For many years we did this while some members sat down with pen and paper to share their experience, strength, and hope in the creation of our own literature. When we borrow literature and fail to develop our own from our members' experiences, we are not being self-supporting. We do our members a disservice when we do not use the literature approved at our World Service Conference in our meetings.

We must ask ourselves if there are services to be provided and what role we are playing to see those needs fulfilled. The word contributions refer to many things in addition to money. This

tradition also speaks to the services and materials we provide that should be created by and for our members. Well-meaning members often want to utilize speakers from outside Nar-Anon. Longtime members may choose to point out how this does not comply with the spiritual principle of being self-supporting. We can rely on our members sharing their experience, strength, and hope. When we bring outside literature, information from other programs, or professional support to our groups, we are sending the message that our program is not enough.

### **Key Words or Phrases**

Contribution

Fully Self-supporting

Outside Entities

### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Responsibility

Respect

Unity

Anonymity

### **Study Questions**

1. What contributions, other than money, are part of Tradition Seven?
2. How do members of my group contribute to the Seventh Tradition?
3. How can we encourage service beyond the group level to assure there are enough members to carry out needed services?
4. Why does accepting contributions, even non-monetary ones, from outside entities violate our Seventh Tradition?
5. How can sharing our experience, strength, and hope through writing contribute to the fellowship?
6. How does reading from outside literature in our meeting dilute our message and weaken our unity?

***Tradition Eight: Nar-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.***

Why does Tradition Eight say, "Nar-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional"? While it may be tempting to hire a celebrity to endorse Nar-Anon, our Twelfth Step message is best carried by those who are practicing these principles. What better example of how to carry the message of Nar-Anon than from those who walk the walk? There is no better messenger than a member sharing their experience, strength, and hope of what Nar-Anon has done in their own lives.

In our Seventh Tradition we discussed how our groups ought to be fully self-supporting, both financially and when filling service positions. Beyond the groups we have service centers and professional needs. Whenever we can, we utilize the skills of our members, but we cannot expect every aspect or need to be met by volunteers. We may find we do not have enough members who have special skills or are able to donate their time. This may require hiring outside professionals. Without our Seventh Tradition donations, we may not be able to hire enough special workers to fulfill the needs of the fellowship.

## Key Words or Phrases

Twelfth Step work

Forever non-professional

Service centers

Special workers

## Unspoken Spiritual Principles

Service

Anonymity

Equality

## Study Questions

1. What is Twelfth Step work?
2. Why is it important that our Twelfth Step work remain non-professional?
3. What tasks do service centers provide and why might we hire special workers?
4. How can we help members with specialized training understand anonymity is essential in the group to assure equality?

***Tradition Nine: Our groups, as such ought never to be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.***

Beyond the group level there is much work to be done. It can become overwhelming for groups to try and do everything. Nar-Anon has a service structure that eases the burden. Together the groups combine resources and trusted servants to do the same tasks to maximize our efforts for multiple groups. There is no need for every group to maintain a meeting schedule or create a website. We turn these tasks over to an area or region. In the area or region committees are formed, and trusted servants perform these tasks for the groups.

The Concepts of Service are guiding principles the committees and trusted servants use in carrying out their tasks while always remaining responsible to the groups they serve. When we clearly define what our service committees or boards are to do, we should also grant them the authority to carry out these tasks. We do not want to be inundated with information from these service arms. These service bodies need always practice the Nar-Anon principles in all their endeavors, remembering the spiritual nature of service. When a service body runs into a roadblock or challenge, they should consult the groups they serve for guidance.

Our service boards and committees lighten the burdens of the groups. This allows them to focus on their primary purpose, to help families and friends of addicts. Without the service structure, our groups could get burned out and lose sight of our primary purpose by trying to do all that needs to be done. Tradition Nine helps Nar-Anon and its members maximize all its resources.

## Key Words or Phases

Organized  
Service boards  
Committees  
Directly responsible  
Those they serve

## Unspoken Spiritual Principles

Simplicity  
Service  
Accountability  
Responsibility  
Anonymity

## Study Questions

1. What does "ought never to be organized" mean to me?
2. How can being organized affect the group?
3. In what ways do we let our groups know that service boards and committees exist to serve them?
4. How does this tradition help keep the focus mentioned in Tradition Five?
5. How do our groups help support these services with donations or volunteers?

***Tradition Ten: The Nar-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.***

As individuals, we may have opinions on outside issues and newsworthy topics. When we come to our meetings, we leave our opinions outside. When we share on outside topics, we may alienate others who feel differently or create dissension in our group. This tradition does not say we cannot have opinions about these topics, but in our group we do not share on these issues.

In Traditions Three and Six, we learned not to affiliate our group and the Nar-Anon name with outside causes. In Tradition Ten, we take it a step further to consider what may happen should we affiliate or endorse outside enterprises. Maybe we never considered the potential for public controversy. This principle also addresses why we do not endorse treatment centers, hire celebrity spokespersons, endorse a political candidate, or address current social issues during our meetings. What if the treatment center or the celebrity spokesperson became engulfed in a public scandal? Merely by association we may convey a negative impression of Nar-Anon. New members or overzealous members may be tempted to discuss current social issues during the meeting. The chairperson or a seasoned member should remind the group of Tradition Ten and why we do not discuss such topics during a meeting. As trusted servants, we are accountable to the groups in everything we do.



When we keep Nar-Anon's spiritual aim and nature pure, we avoid many of the pitfalls that affect other organizations. We must think of every member in our meeting, other meetings, and all meetings around the world. We must think of the member yet to come. Drawing Nar-Anon into public controversy sends an unattractive message to those who desperately need Nar-Anon.

### Key Words or Phases

Outside issues

Never

Public controversy

### Unspoken Spiritual Principles

Anonymity

Freedom

Unity

### Study Questions

1. Why do we refrain from discussing outside interests during the meeting?
2. How can outside issues harm the health of the group?
3. How can we help members understand why we do not get involved in outside causes no matter how worthy?
4. In what ways can a group mistakenly associate the Nar-Anon name with outside entities? How can we avoid this practice?
5. In what ways is the discussion of social media recovery groups an outside issue?

***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, films, internet, and other forms of mass media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all NA members.***

The Eleventh Tradition keeps Nar-Anon safe for everyone, even those who have not found us. It tells us how to carry out our public relations and outreach endeavors. How do we grow if we don't promote Nar-Anon? Through our Twelfth Step work we carry our message to the public without making promises or giving guarantees. We attract others to Nar-Anon by telling how the program has helped us grow and improve our lives. Attraction by example keeps our meetings healthy. Promotion, such as advertising, puts our program in the spotlight and may cause us to lose our anonymity. Promotion also includes members who overzealously try to convince others they need Nar-Anon.

Our Eleventh Tradition reminds us to remain anonymous in press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media. There are many ways to protect anonymity while doing public relations

outreach. We use only first names during face-to-face contact with the public. When signing documents, we can use the committee or region name. We can utilize conference approved public service announcements in the media. When speaking on radio or film, we ask that our names not be used. A blurred picture in video or incomplete images in photos, such as the back of the head, are acceptable for newspapers. Using clear images sends a message to members that their identity may be compromised. We can only attract if we send a safe message. We must be careful to always carry a message to those yet to come that anonymity is of utmost importance. It is especially important to protect our members who may be punished for attending meetings. If we have a message that is attractive to those who need it, newcomers may stay.

In service we may have to use our full names when renting rooms, filling out applications, purchasing literature, or opening bank accounts. This tradition does not forbid the use of your full name; that is up to the individual member. No member should be forced to reveal their name to serve. This may limit volunteers for certain service positions. When a service position requires disclosure of a member's full name, the member should consider whether they find the disclosure acceptable.

With all the changing technologies, we must be mindful of anonymity when using social media. Posting pictures and telling stories of our addicted loved ones can create controversy. Many employers are searching social media sites to examine the integrity of applicants. We never know with whom we may cross paths, and we must protect the anonymity of all our members.

Lastly, this tradition states, "we need guard with special care the anonymity of all NA members." We tend to forget the stigma of being a recovering addict. We are so happy our loved ones have finally stopped using; we want to tell the world what NA has done for them. We do not know who is attending our meetings, from potential employers to co-workers. There are many ways we could break the addict's anonymity or our own.

### **Key Words or Phrases**

Public relations  
Attraction  
Promotion  
Need always  
Personal anonymity  
Special Care

### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Anonymity  
Safety  
Unanimity  
Humility  
Security

### **Study Questions**

1. What does "special care" in this tradition mean to me?

2. Why is it important to specifically protect anonymity at the levels of press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media?
3. What is the difference between attraction and promotion?
4. What did I find attractive about Nar-Anon?
5. What does "need always" mean to me?
6. What are some possible consequences of breaking anonymity?

***Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.***

Tradition Eleven told us how to protect anonymity in public relations endeavors. Tradition Twelve takes it a step further in practicing anonymity. It makes no difference who we are, what we do, how much money we make, or what job we hold. In Nar-Anon we practice humility in service without the need for credit. We are asked to be of humble service as equals working for the good of Nar-Anon as a whole. This means putting these principles first no matter how we feel about anything or anyone else.

The Twelfth Tradition asks us to work together even with those with whom we might disagree. We all come from different social, economic, spiritual, and racial backgrounds. In Nar-Anon we work together for one purpose, to help families and friends of addicts. The traditions are the tools and basic instructions on how to serve and how to solve our common problems. Many issues that arise in Nar-Anon can be resolved by studying these traditions, consulting a sponsor, service sponsor, service literature, and having faith in a Higher Power to handle the results.

#### **Key Words or Phrases**

Spiritual foundation

Anonymity

Principles above personalities

#### **Unspoken Spiritual Principles**

Anonymity

Equality

Humility

Faith

#### **Study Questions**

1. Why are the Twelve Traditions summed up with "anonymity"?
2. What does "spiritual foundation" mean to me?
3. Why does the Twelfth Tradition state "of all our traditions"?
4. How can I put principles above personalities?
5. How can I recognize when I am not putting the principles first?
6. How can groups prevent dominant personalities from controlling the group?
7. How does anonymity lead to humble service?