



The Twelve Traditions of NA

First Tradition

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.

Our First Tradition concerns unity and our common welfare. One of the most important things about our new way of life is being a part of a group of addicts seeking recovery. Our survival is directly related to the survival of the group and the Fellowship. To maintain unity within NA, it is imperative that the group remain stable, or the entire Fellowship perishes and the individual dies.

Second Tradition

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.

Our direction in service comes from a God of our understanding, whether we serve as individuals, as a group, or as a service board or committee. Whenever we come together, we seek the presence and guidance of this loving Higher Power. This direction then guides us through all our actions. [...] When we choose a member to serve us in some capacity, we exercise mutual trust.

Third Tradition

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

The Third Tradition encourages freedom from judgment. It leads us on the path of service toward an attitude of helpfulness, acceptance, and unconditional love. [...] Addiction is a deadly disease. We know that addicts who don't find recovery can expect nothing better than jails, institutions, and death. Refusing admission to any addict, even one who comes merely out of curiosity may be a death sentence for that addict.

Fourth Tradition

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

Each group does have complete freedom, except when their actions affect other groups or NA as a whole. If we check to make sure that our actions are clearly within the bounds of our traditions; if we do not dictate to other groups, or force anything upon them; and if we consider the consequences of our action ahead of time, then all will be well.

Fifth Tradition

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

What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.

Sixth Tradition

An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Within the limits established by Tradition Six, we have tremendous freedom to carry the message of recovery and help other addicts. We have clear boundaries set by our identity as Narcotics Anonymous. When we take care to observe those boundaries, our outside relationships enhance our ability to carry the message to the addict who still suffers rather than diverting us from our primary purpose.

Seventh Tradition

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

By encouraging our group to pay its own way, the Seventh Tradition gives our group the freedom to share its recovery as it sees fit, not obligated to outside contributors. Further, it gives our group the freedom that comes from inner strength, the strength that develops through applying spiritual principles.

Eighth Tradition

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

In this tradition we say that we have no professionals. By this, we mean we have no staff psychiatrists, doctors, lawyers, or counselors. Our program works by one addict helping another. If we employ professionals in NA groups, we would destroy our unity. We are simply addicts of equal status freely helping one another.

Ninth Tradition

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

NA groups join together, combining their resources to create service boards and committees that will help them better fulfill their primary purpose. Those boards and committees are not called to govern NA; they are called, rather, to faithfully execute the trust given them by the groups they serve.

Tenth Tradition

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

There are a great number of addiction-related issues that others might expect a worldwide society of recovering drug addicts to take positions on. [...] Our answer, according to Tradition Ten, is that our groups and our fellowship take no position, pro or con, on any issues except the NA program itself. [...] For our own survival, we have no opinion on outside issues.

Eleventh Tradition

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.

The existence of a public relations "policy" implies the importance of a public relations "program" in carrying out our fellowship's primary purpose. [...] As NA groups, service boards, and committees, we deliberately and energetically cultivate good public relations, not as an incidental result of our normal activity but as a way to better carry our message to addicts. [...] Public anonymity helps keep the focus of our public relations on the NA message, not the PI workers involved.

Twelfth Tradition

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

Anonymity is one of the basic elements of our recovery and it pervades our Traditions and our Fellowship. It protects us from our own defects of character and renders personalities and their differences powerless. Anonymity in action makes it impossible for personalities to come before principles.