

Twelve Traditions Checklist

Following comments regarding the existing Traditions Checklist, this new one has been created. Most questions have been carried over, some have been removed and several new ones have been added. This was done in order to make a Traditions Checklist that better reflects practices in the UK and better relate to the Traditions.

Tradition 1

Short form

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

Long form

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

Questions

1. In my group am I 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 put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
5. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
6. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
7. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behaviour that bristles with hostility?
8. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
9. Do I consider the welfare of all members my home group or just those I like?
10. Do we listen to the minority in discussions and ensure their inclusion?

Tradition 2

Short form

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.

Long form

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority— a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

Questions

1. In group conscience meetings am I looking to find God's will or am I secretly trying to push my own agenda?
2. Am I in sufficient contact with my Higher Power to consider myself able to try to speak on His behalf?
3. Am I too trusting of AA leaders? Do I take enough responsibility for my own understanding or simply parrot what I'm told?
4. Do I try to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. As a leader, do I drive by mandate or lead by example?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?
7. Do I attend my group's group conscience meetings?

Tradition 3

Short form

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

Long form

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend on money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

Questions

1. In my mind, do I judge the sincerity of some new AA members?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I show prejudice against those who have other problems?
4. Do I let language, religion, race, gender, sexuality, education, age, fear or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman or an ex-prisoner? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human?

Tradition 4

Short form

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

Long form

With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority other than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighbouring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

Questions

1. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Internationalists miles from port?
2. Do I put down other groups when they operate differently from mine, or do I learn from it?
3. Am I mindful of the fact that with autonomy comes the responsibility of maintaining unity?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?

Tradition 5

Short form

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

Long form

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose— that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Questions

1. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
2. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
3. Does our group carry the message effectively? Could we do anything to make it clearer?
4. Do I know exactly what the message is?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfil our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?
7. Do I understand how a group is defined?

Tradition 6

Short form

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.

Long form

Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A. such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A.—and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

Questions

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Would it be acceptable to make a special donation to the owners of the building we meet in to express our gratitude?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the council's advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Should our group make donations to charities or organisations we wish to support.

Tradition 7

Short form

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

Long form

The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies, that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise.

Questions

1. Are we supporting our group through our own contributions?
2. What is a prudent reserve and do we send surplus funds promptly to Intergroup?
3. What is our group money spent on? Could we spend it more wisely?
4. Should we accept money from newcomers or visitors or favours from landlords or suppliers?
5. Does our treasurer report regularly enough? Does our treasurer feel sufficiently supported and are they accountable?
6. How much is the right amount to give for tradition seven?
7. Is my giving anonymous or do I make my paper money obvious and stigmatise those on a lower income?
8. Do we understand the 'power of the purse'?

Tradition 8

Short form

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centres may employ special workers.

Long form

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counselling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.

Questions

1. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
2. Do I sometimes try to get some reward—even if not money—for my personal AA efforts?
3. Do I understand what AA employees there are and what they do?
4. Does being nonprofessional mean that we should not do our service work to a professional standard?
5. Do I give more value to the opinions of a member who works in the recovery sector or do I listen to and value the experience of all members?

Tradition 9

Short form

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

Long form

Each A.A. group needs the least possible organisation. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office in New York. They are authorised by the groups to handle our overall public relations, and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

Questions

1. Is our group over organised? Are our leaders servants or do they take control?
2. Am I aware of the service structure of AA? Of the upside-down triangle?
3. Do I feel that our service structure is accountable? Do I understand how it is accountable?
4. Do I serve to the best of my ability or do I leave the work to others because 'it's not my job' or 'someone else will do it' or judge that it'll be 'good for the newer member'?
5. Am I aware of those I am responsible to in my A.A. work?
6. Do I resist formal aspects of A.A. because I fear them as authoritative?
7. Does 'not organised' mean no organisation?

Tradition 10

Short form

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

Long form

No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatsoever.

Questions

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an "AA opinion" on Antabuse? Tranquillisers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The Government? Drug and alcohol legislation? 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 "AA opinion"?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. When offering guidance or sponsoring, do I offer my opinion as if it is AA lore?

5. What would AA 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 AA? Inside AA?

Tradition 11

Short form

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.

Long form

Our relations with the general public should be characterised by personal anonymity. We think A.A. should avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better that our friends recommend us.

Questions

1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I make it seem unattractive?
2. Do I understand the level of anonymity this tradition suggests? Am I an 'invisible' alcoholic?
3. When in service am I careful to avoid using my name at the level of press, radio and film.
4. Are public forums on the internet 'at the level of press'? Do I inadvertently compromise the anonymity of others?
5. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
6. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
7. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?

Tradition 12

Short form

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

Long form

And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

Questions

1. Why is it good idea for me to place principles before personalities?
2. When I do not like or trust AA's current servants, do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?
4. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Big Book?
5. Do I complain about certain AAs' behaviour? Who made me so smart?
6. Do I fulfil all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Or do I compare myself to others standards?
7. What is the real importance of me among more than two million AAs?
8. Does this tradition mean we ought not have personalities, or even one myself?
9. Do I aim to practise 'a genuine humility'?