

PRACTICING
THE
PRINCIPLES
OF OUR
TRADITIONS



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This pamphlet was written by
Greg P. in the early 90s.
Known to many as 'the Gentle
Giant', Greg loved NA and was
also a prolific writer. He
wanted to get members to really
think about the program through
his writings. This pamphlet is
but one example.

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NOTE: Copies of this pamphlet printed last month incorrectly identified it as a "work-in-progress from the Carolina Region Literature Committee". Research indicates the committee did work on it in the late 90s; however, the project was eventually shelved.

PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR TRADITIONS

TRADITION ONE

The program of Narcotics Anonymous is based on the spiritual principles embodied in the Twelve Traditions. Working the Steps forms the basis of our personal recovery and leads to a spiritual awakening. Part of our spiritual awakening may involve being of service to our fellowship. It is through service to Narcotics Anonymous that we begin to understand our Traditions.

Gradually, we learn we can use the Traditions in our everyday lives. The Traditions have much to teach us about simply getting along with one another. When we practice the principles of our Traditions in dealing with all people, our lives become more manageable.

This pamphlet represents the collective experience of a group of addicts trying to "practice these principles in all our affairs." We would like to share our experience with you.

TRADITION ONE: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon NA unity."

Our personal recovery begins with an admission that we can no longer make it on our own. We come to recognize that our survival now depends on being part of a fellowship of recovering addicts. We begin to see how each of us is part of a greater whole, both in and outside the fellowship. The focus of our lives shifts from "me" and "mine" to "us" and "ours".

As we experience sharing and caring for other people, our wall of isolation and false self-sufficiency crumbles. We find strength, hope and fulfillment in acknowledging our interdependence. Growing spiritually, we no longer base our actions on purely selfish motives. Our choices reflect the greater interest we take in the welfare of those around us.

Read the chapter in THE BASIC TEXT for the first tradition. Read the chapter in IT WORKS HOW & WHY on the first tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is unity?
4. How is unity the practical foundation of our traditions?
5. Should we place "our common welfare" before our personal welfare? If so why?
6. What are some of the common causes of disunity?
7. How do you fit into NA unity?
8. How does personal recovery depend on NA unity?
9. What are some of the benefits we receive from living this tradition?
10. The spiritual principles of this tradition are acceptance, surrender, and honesty. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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TRADITION TWO

TRADITION TWO: "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.

Working the NA program helps us to form a relationship with a Higher Power. As we come to rely on this Power, living according to spiritual principles becomes a reality for us. We develop a personal conscience and become trustworthy in our interactions with others.

No longer operating from fear, we attach less importance to getting our way. We become less controlling and more willing to cooperate. It becomes easier to share our feelings openly and honestly, while being receptive and respectful to those of others. We learn when to yield in a conflict, laying aside our differences for the common good.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the second tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How & Why on the second tradition. Write the answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. How does the Higher Power we found when we began working Step 3 relate to this tradition?
4. What is "Group Conscience"? How can it be measured?
5. Is "Group Conscience" always right?
6. What is a trusted servant? How do they serve? Who do they serve?
7. What does "govern" mean? How does it apply to this tradition?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are surrender, faith, humility, open-mindedness, integrity, and anonymity. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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TRADITION THREE:

TRADITION THREE: "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using."

At our first NA meetings, we are welcomed regardless of our social, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. In sharing the joy and pain of our lives, we get in touch with our common humanity.

We learn to look past the superficial differences that once kept us isolated. Our ability to accept those around us on an equal basis increases.

Practicing the principle of tolerance helps us to live and work in harmony with one another.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the third tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the third tradition. Write the answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is a "desire to stop using"?
4. How can we tell if someone has a desire to stop using?
5. What are some of the ways we deny membership to someone? How can we avoid them?
6. What are the rights, privileges and responsibilities of NA membership?
7. Why is this the "only" requirement?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are tolerance, compassion, anonymity, and humility. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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TRADITION FOUR:

TRADITION FOUR: "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole."

The NA way of life challenges us to take responsibility for our lives. We learn to make our own decisions and accept the consequences. When meeting hardship or disappointment, we choose not to blame anyone else. We make the best of the situation and get on with daily living.

Developing a sense of who we are and what we are about gives us an appreciation of the same process at work in other people. We learn to recognize and respect the boundaries people set for themselves, giving them the freedom to take care of their own lives.

Knowing that today our actions can affect others, we strive to do "the right thing for the right reasons."

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the fourth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the fourth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is autonomy? Why isn't it a license to do anything we want?
4. What sort of things affect 'NA as a whole'?
5. How can we use autonomy to further the "Primary Purpose" of our groups?
6. How can we avoid misusing the "Principle of Autonomy"?
7. When does something affect other groups or NA as a whole?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are independence, responsibility, open-mindedness, anonymity, and unity. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR TRADITIONS

TRADITION FIVE:

TRADITION FIVE: "Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."

One of the gifts of recovery is realizing that we can help another suffering addict. In reaching out to someone else, we put what we have learned of the spiritual principles of the program into action.

We learn that by helping others, we are really helping ourselves. As we develop more concern for others, we lose some of our self-centeredness. Our lives gain a spiritual focus and a greater sense of purpose.

We are grateful to know we are carrying a message of recovery by living useful, productive lives.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the fifth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the fifth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. Why is our primary purpose important?
4. Why does our primary purpose need to be defined in our traditions?
5. What is your purpose as a member?
6. What is the purpose of the NA group.
7. Do NA groups have other purposes than to carry the message? If so, what are they?
8. Who's responsibility is it to fulfill and maintain our primary purpose?
9. The spiritual principles of this tradition are integrity, responsibility, unity, anonymity. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR TRADITIONS

TRADITION SIX:

TRADITION SIX: "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."

Many of us come to Narcotics Anonymous having exhausted our spiritual, emotional, and financial resources. The NA program enables us to return to the mainstream of life. We find satisfaction and fulfillment in pursuing careers, rebuilding relationships, and acquiring wealth or material possessions.

Yet, we must not become so attached to these pursuits that we lose our direction and sense of purpose. Living the Steps requires that we seek a balance between "Self, Society, Service, and God." If we focus on any one of these, to the exclusion of the others, our recovery suffers.

By practicing the principle of balance, we realize our primary purpose. We stay clean and learn to be better instruments of our Higher Power.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the sixth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the sixth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What do the following mean: Endorse, Finance, Lend the NA name?
4. What is a related facility? What is an outside enterprise?
5. How could endorsing, financing or lending the NA name lead to "problems of money, property or prestige?"
6. What does it mean to be diverted from our primary purpose?
7. How do service boards, service committees, conventions, etc. relate to this tradition?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are humility, integrity, faith, harmony, and anonymity. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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TRADITION SEVEN:

TRADITION SEVEN: "Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

Our whole lives, we took from others. We were always looking outside ourselves to fill our financial, emotional, and spiritual needs.

As we work the Steps, we strive to become responsible and productive members of society. Taking advantage of the charity of others is no longer an option for us. Instead of living off our families and friends, we choose to be fully self-supporting in our personal lives.

Becoming an asset rather than a liability, though it may be difficult for us, increases our self-esteem and enhances our sense of self-worth.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the seventh tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the seventh tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What are some ways, other than financial, that you can help NA be fully self-supporting?
4. What is the "Principle of self sacrifice" and how does it relate to this tradition?
5. What is an outside contribution?
6. Why shouldn't NA accept outside contributions?
7. The spiritual principles of this tradition are gratitude, responsibility, faith, integrity, anonymity, and freedom.

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TRADITION EIGHT:

TRADITION EIGHT: Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Our recovery process begins when we ask for help for fellow addicts in Narcotics Anonymous. At first, we cannot understand their unconditional love and attention, but we accept it. Eventually, we see for ourselves that we can only keep what we have by giving freely to others what was freely given to us. We gain the ability to give of ourselves without expecting something in return.

NA teaches us that we no longer have to do everything ourselves. We understand we can no longer survive in isolation. We identify our needs and take the actions to get them met. We learn to distinguish what we can handle ourselves and what we should turn over to an appropriate professional.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the eighth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the eighth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is professionalism?
4. Does professionalism contradict the "Principle of Anonymity"?
5. What is a special worker?
6. Are special workers responsible to group conscience? If so, how?
7. Is a special worker an employee of NA? Who hires them? How do they get paid?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are prudence, humility, anonymity, and integrity.

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TRADITION NINE:

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

Our growth can be measured by the degree and quality of our interaction with other people. We develop the ability to see how our thoughts and actions contribute to the lives of others. We begin to show up for our families, friends, and employers in way we never could before. We become accountable and directly responsible for our actions.

Assuming direct responsibility as productive members of society, we become more deeply involved within our communities. We may find ourselves taking an interest in, or working for, a social or political cause.

Today, we can support the services provided by our churches, schools, and institutions of government, instead of being just beneficiaries of these services.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the ninth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the ninth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What are "NA", "NA as such", and "NA as a whole" and the "Fellowship of NA"?
4. Is the service structure part of "NA as such"? How does it relate to this tradition?
5. Can we create anything other than service boards or committees? If so, how?
6. Who do our "Service boards and committees" serve?
7. What does direct responsibility mean?
8. The spiritual principles of this tradition are humility, prudence, fidelity, and responsibility. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR TRADITIONS

TRADITION TEN:

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

Having no opinion on outside issues protects the NA group from straying from its primary purpose. In our personal lives, we learn that it is okay to say: "I don't know. I have no opinion on that." We don't have to express our opinions on everything. Minding our own business, we refrain from giving unsolicited advice and begin to respect other peoples's rights to their own opinions.

By practicing the principle of self-restraint, we are better able to keep the focus on our growing self-awareness and developing relationship with a God of our understanding.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the tenth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the tenth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is an outside issue?
4. When does an NA member's opinion get mistaken for NA's opinion?
5. How could NA'S name be drawn into public controversy?
6. What effect could being involved in public controversy have on NA?
7. How do we deal with internal controversy?
8. The spiritual principle of this tradition is humility. Define in your own words the spiritual principal in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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TRADITION ELEVEN

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, and films.

Over time, we learn that our recovery speaks for itself. The changes in our lives are evident in the way we live. Our attitudes and actions draw friends, families, and co-workers to us.

As we grow spiritually, we find less need to take the credit or seek recognition for every admirable act. We remember that nothing comes to us, not even a single day clean, except with the help of our Higher Power. Accepting that we are but imperfect instruments of God's will helps us keep an attitude of humility in all that we do.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the eleventh tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the eleventh tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is attraction? What is promotion? What is the difference?
4. How does the "Personal Anonymity" of this tradition differ from the "Anonymity" of the twelfth tradition?
5. What is "Public Relations"? What is our public relations policy?
6. Does this tradition separate us from society? If so, how?
7. Why is personal anonymity at the levels of press, radio, and films so important?
8. The spiritual principles of the tradition are service and faith. Define in your own words the spiritual principles in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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TRADITION TWELVE

TRADITION TWELVE: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

The most powerful principle we have in countering the symptoms of our disease is anonymity. Anonymity is a guiding force in our spiritual and emotional growth, and in our interactions with others. It enables us to let go of the fears we use to separate and isolate ourselves from other people.

Anonymity is true humility at work in our lives. Practicing anonymity helps us realize that, as human beings, we are all the same, sharing the same assets and defects. We can accept our own imperfections and those of others as just part of being human. We stop judging others and accept them for who they are. We set aside personal differences in order to work together.

Anonymity gives us the freedom to truly be ourselves, not a preconceived image of who we ought to be. With this freedom comes a greater interest in helping people in the spirit of selfless service.

Practicing the principles of our tradition helps reinforce what we have learned from working the Steps, giving us the opportunity to gain experience in many aspects of spiritual living.

Read the chapter in the Basic Text on the twelfth tradition. Read the chapter in It Works: How and Why on the twelfth tradition. Write answers to the following:

1. What does this tradition mean to you?
2. What does this tradition mean to NA?
3. What is the "Principal of Anonymity"?
4. How is anonymity the "Spiritual Foundation of all of our traditions, specifically?"
5. Is there a difference between public anonymity and anonymity within NA?

6. Why is it our tendency to focus on personalities? How does this violate anonymity?
7. The spiritual principle of this tradition is anonymity. Define in your own words the spiritual principle in this tradition. Look up and write the definition from the dictionary.

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