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The Beacon

Email: Beacon@aaworcester.org

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Tradition Nine

The ninth of a new series of articles explaining The Twelve Traditions <LB"AA, AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED; BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE."

WHEN Tradition Nine was first written, it said that "Alcoholics Anonymous needs the least possible organization." In years since then, we have changed our minds about that. Today we are able to say with assurance that Alcoholics Anonymous. . . AA as a whole. . . should never be organized at all. Then, in seeming contradiction, we proceed to create special service boards and committees which in themselves are organized. How, then, can we have an unorganized movement which can and does create a service organization for itself? Scanning this puzzler, people say, "What do they mean, no organization?!"

Well, let's see. Did anyone ever hear of a nation, a church, a political party, even a benevolent association that had no membership rules? Did anyone ever hear of a society which couldn't somehow discipline its members and enforce obedience to necessary rules and regulations? Doesn't every society on earth give authority of some of its members to impose obedience upon the rest and to punish or expel offenders? Therefore every nation, in fact every form of society, has to be a government administered by human beings. Power to direct or govern is the essence of organization everywhere.

Yet Alcoholics Anonymous is an exception. It does not conform to this pattern. Neither its General Service Conference, its Foundation Board, nor the humblest group committee can issue a single directive to an AA member and make it stick, let alone mete out any punishment. We've tried it lots of times, but utter failure is always the result. Groups have tried to expel members, but the banished come back to sit in the meeting place saying, "This is life for us; you can't keep us out." Committees have instructed many an AA to stop working on a chronic backslider, only to be told: "How I do my Twelfth Step work is my business. Who are you to judge?" This doesn't mean an AA won't take advice or suggestion from more experienced members, but he surely won't take orders. Who is more unpopular than the old-time AA, full of wisdom, who moves to another area and tries to tell the group there how to run its business? He and all like him who "view with alarm for the good of AA" meet the most stubborn resistance or, worse still, laughter.

You might think AA's headquarters in New York would be an exception. Surely the people there would have to have some authority. But long ago, trustees and secretaries alike found they could do no more than make suggestions, and very mild ones at that. They even had to coin a couple of sentences which still go into half the letters they write: "Of course you are at perfect liberty to handle this matter any way you please. But the majority experience in AA does seem to suggest. . ." Now, that attitude is far removed from central government, isn't it? We recognize that alcoholics can't be dictated to. . . individually or collectively.

At this junction we can hear a churchman exclaim, "They are making disobedience a virtue!" He is joined by a psychiatrist who says, "Defiant brats! They won't grow up and conform to social usage!" The man in the street says, "I don't understand it. They must be nuts!" But all these observers have overlooked something unique in Alcoholics Anonymous. Unless each AA member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant. His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles.

The same stern threat applies to the group itself. Unless there is approximate conformity to AA's Twelve Traditions, the group too can deteriorate and die. So we of AA do obey spiritual principles, first because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are AA's disciplinarians; we need no others.

It is clear now that we ought never to name boards to govern us, but it is equally clear that we shall always need to authorize workers to serve us. It is the difference between the spirit of vested authority and the spirit of service; two concepts which are poles apart. It is in this spirit of service that we elect the AA's group informal rotating committee, the Intergroup Association for the area, and the General Service Conferences of Alcoholics Anonymous for AA as a whole. Even our Foundation, once an independent Board, is today directly accountable to our fellowship. Its trustees are the caretakers and expeditors of our world services.

Just as the aim of each AA member is personal sobriety, the aim of our services is to bring sobriety within reach of all who want it. If nobody does the group's chores, if the area's telephone rings unanswered, if we do not reply to our mail, then AA as we know it would stop. Our communications lines with those who need our help would be broken.

AA has to function, but at the same time it must avoid those dangers of great wealth, prestige, and entrenched power which necessarily tempt other societies. Though Tradition Nine at first sight seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only by the spirit of service. . . a true fellowship.

Bill W.

Step Nine

“Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others”

Tradition Nine

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

Concept Nine

Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

On-Line 12 Steps & 12 Traditions, Articles, and Tradition Checklist's

www.aagrapevine.org/stepsTrads/stepsTrads_index.html

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- 1. Do I Still try to boss things in AA?
- 2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
- 3. Am I Mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program— even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
- 4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
- 5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
- 6. Why doesn't every AA group need constitution or bylaws?
- 7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully— and profit thereby— when the time comes?
- 8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

Elections of new Committee chairs

Are happening soon

Have you done your part to be of Service to AA ?

Life is a dance, When you take the steps



SPONSORSHIP CORNER:

Continued from the August issue...

Can a sponsor be too firm

Some sponsors believe in being fairly blunt with a newcomer. They describe the A.A. program as they understand it. They explain what A.A. has meant to them. They point out that there is no known *cure* for alcoholism, but that it *can be arrested*.

Having done these things, they leave the next move up to the newcomer. If the still-drinking alcoholic does not reach a decision immediately to join A. A., this sponsor believes in letting the situation alone.

This approach is not totally unsympathetic. Many alcoholics respect and recognize it as an attempt to be completely factual about A.A., to avoid emotion.

The A.A. program is based on certain tested principles, which a newcomer may disregard only at risk. Firm sponsorship emphasizes this and usually works well in convincing the newcomer. Most A.A.'s, however, recognize that firmness overdone can upset a newcomer. It should be tempered with sympathy and understanding.

Can a sponsor be too overprotective?

In their anxiety to help a newcomer achieve sobriety, some sponsors may tend to be overprotective. They worry unduly about the persons they sponsor and tend to smother them with attention. In doing so, they may run the risk of having a newcomer depend on an individual member, rather than the A.A. program. The most effective sponsors recognize that alcoholics who join A.A. must eventually stand on their own two feet and make their decisions - and that there is a difference between helping people to their feet and insisting on holding them up thereafter.

Another danger of overprotectiveness is that it may annoy the newcomer to the point of resenting the attempts to help - and expressing that resentment by turning away from A.A.

Can a sponsor be too casual?

Some sponsors prefer to adopt a casual attitude toward newcomers with whom they work. For example, they are perfectly willing to spend time with the new member who asks for it, but rarely take the time or trouble to call between meetings or help the newcomer get to meetings.

Some newcomers actually flourish best pretty much on their own. But there may be some danger in this approach: A timid or reserved newcomer may conclude that the group and the individual sponsor are not interested in helping.

Many present members report that they did not make a firm decision to adopt the A.A. program until months or years after their first contact with A.A., simply because they were allowed to drift away from the group. A growing number of groups try to avoid this failing by establishing a program for the following up newcomers during a period of weeks or months after an initial approach is made to the group.

*Reprinted with AAWS permission - questions and answers on sponsorship P.21-22

A word on anonymity:

Should I keep my AA Membership a secret?, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me) ? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?

*reprinted from the AA grapevine

THE HOME GROUP:**How AA Works For Me****It's all about meetings for me**

I often think of myself as a selfish AA member when it comes to meetings. I live in Cincinnati and attend the St. Xavier noon discussion meeting more often than any other group's. I guess I consider this my home group; however, the other members might never know it because I am usually a silent participant. So for now, writing this article is my way of sharing.

I go because I know I will get my fill of spiritual enlightenment with Twelve-Step discussion and examples of success stories and some not so successful. This is what keeps me sober. I need to see and hear from others that this program works. If I am having a bad day, I can go to the meeting and hear about someone having a worse day and not drinking about it. If I am having an excellent day, I can go to the meeting and hear about someone having an even better day and not celebrating with alcohol. It is my reality check, my safe place, and my break from the chaos that surrounds my professional and personal life. I have twenty-six months of sobriety but never fail to learn a valuable lesson from the person at this meeting with twenty-six hours or twenty-six years.

Before entering this program in February 2000, I spent over twenty years convincing myself that I was not like my father, grandfather, or great grandfather. A breaking point came, however, and I realized my life was not in my control. After getting a DUI, after seeing my wife struggle for years to keep the relationship together and my four kids basically give up on having a father in their lives, and after finding my career in shambles, I willingly gave myself over to the care of God and looked to AA to help guide me back from the brink of disaster. And guide me it did. Gradually my life has been given back to me in abundance. I am now back in love with my wife, my kids actually want me around, my career and financial situation have radically changed, and I have a close relationship with my Higher Power. God working through this program, and especially through these meetings is the reason.

Still, I am selfish at meetings, soaking up what others have to say and typically letting the hour fly by without sharing myself. The beautiful part of this program, however, is that AA is what we need it to be. We do what we need to do to stay sober and make sure we continue to progress. I think each AA member would describe the program a bit differently based on what he or she needs it to be for sobriety. When it comes down to it, getting a sponsor, working the Steps, and going to meetings keep me sober. I am truly blessed to have such an awesome group like St. Xavier as part of my program. As far as giving back, I will work on sharing more. For now, this is the way Alcoholics Anonymous works for this alcoholic.

Bill W.

Join a Group & Get active....

Groups don't drink !





Save The Date

**3rd Annual
Bill S. Memorial
Golf Tournament**

**Friday, October 6th
Townsend Ridge Country Club
Townsend, MA.
Shotgun Start at 12:00 pm**

**Golf, Buffet dinner, Prizes, 50/50 raffle Closest to
pin and longest drive Contest**

\$90 per person proceeds to go to the Fellowship

Or contact Keith C.- keithcarter@yahoo.com



Sign up online at: <http://www.tournevents.com/bills>

We would like to get the following information listed in The Beacon. This event is sponsored by District 26 - General Service. This is a "Save the Date" announcement. We would like this to run thru December.

Event: Joy of Living Weekend

When: Friday evening January 12th, 2007 thru Sunday morning January 14, 2007

**Where: Best Western Royal Plaza
150 Royal Plaza Drive
Fitchburg, MA 01420
978-342-7100**

Email: JoyofLivingWeekend@yahoo.com

Registration Address: P.O. Box 1057 Shirley, MA 01464

Activities planned: workshops, a banquet dinner, dance and lots of meetings and coffee.

I can attach our flyer if that makes things easier for you. Please email me with anything else you need or if I neglected to meet any of your requirements. Thanks in advance for your help.

Sue F

Round-Up

Save the Date..



Steering Committee & Committee Chairpersons

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>email address</u>
Chairperson	Bob McC.	chair@aaworcester.org
Alternate Chair	Harry H.	None
Secretary	Brandy H.	secretary@aaworcester.org
Treasurer	Mary M.	treasurer@aaworcester.org
Alternate Treasurer	Joe N.	
Trustees	Ellen McQ.	
	Bob D.	None
	Jeanne L , Laraine S	
Office Manager	John H.	steps@aaworcester.org
Treatment Facilities	Sue N.	treatment@aaworcester.org
Correctional Facilities	Your Name?	Corrections@aaworcester.org
Halt Line	Scott L.	haltline@aaworcester.org
Social Committee	Kolleen H.	Social@aaworcetser.org
Public Information	Brandy H.	PiChair@aaworcester.org
Webmaster	Brandy H	webmaster@aaworcester.org
Liaison to District 25	Mary M	None
Liaison to Area 30	Your Name?	None
Alcathon Committee	Billy - Inter- group	
Co—Chairs Intergroup & District 25	Tina P.— District 25	None
The Beacon	Ellen McQ.	Beacon@aaworcester.org
C.P.C	Your Name?	professional@aaworcester.org

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Office Hours:
 Monday 10am-2pm
 Tuesday 10am-8pm
 Wednesday 10am-8pm
 Thursday 10am-8pm
 Friday 10am-2pm
 Saturday 9am-2pm
 Sunday CLOSED

Do I do my part?

The opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does the publication of any article imply an endorsement by either A.A., general services nor Intergroup. Comments, questions and articles may be directed to The Beacon. * All excerpts & Articles reprinted with permission from AAWS

The Beacon—100 Grove Street Suite 309 Worcester, MA 01605 email:beacon@aaworcester.org

The Beacon Staff: September 2005-December 2006 ~ Editor: Ellen McQ.—Courage to Change , Charlton, MA.

Assistant Editor: Mary M.—Courage to Change, Charlton Support Staff: Renee R. We hope you enjoy the changes!

Rule 62 “ Don't take yourself too damn seriously.”



SLIP—Sobriety losing it's priority
 HALT—Hungry angry lonely tired
 BUD—Building up to Drink
 TIME—things I must earn
 HOW—Honesty openness willingness

Alcoholism is a disease but AA dosen't have to be a life sentence

Service Meetings Monthly Schedule			
InterGroup/District 25 & 26			
Public Information	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 309 Worcester	4th Monday	7:00 pm
District 25 (GSR's)	St. Joan of Arc Church 570 Lincoln St. Worcester	1st Tuesday	7:30 pm
Joint Corrections	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 309 Worcester	2nd Tuesday	7:00 pm
District 25 - CPC Committee	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 309 Worcester	2nd Wed.	6:30 pm
District 26 (GSR's)	Local 60 Union Hall Mechanic St. Leominster	1st Thursday	7:00 pm
Steering Committee	St. Joan of Arc Church 570 Lincoln St. Worcester	2nd Thursday	6:00 pm
Intergroup Delegates	St. Joan of Arc Church 570 Lincoln St. Worcester	2nd Thursday	7:00 pm
Social Committee	Intergroup Office 100 Grove Street # 309 Worcester	3rd Thursday	6:00pm
Joint Treatment	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 309 Worcester	4th Saturday	10:00 am
Area 30			
Grapevine Committee	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	4th Sunday	1:00pm
Literature Committee	Carter Methodist Church 800 Highland Ave. Needham	1st Monday	7:30pm
Eastern Mass. GSC	St. John's 80 Mt. Auburn Watertown	4th Wed.	8:00pm
Joint Public Information	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	1st Thursday	7:00pm
CPC Committee	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	2nd Thursday	7:00pm
Archives Committee	St. John's 80 Mt. Auburn Watertown	3rd Thursday	7:30pm
Corrections Committee	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	4th Thursday	TBD
Joint Treatment Facilities	St. Paul's 59 Court Street Dedham	3rd Friday	8:00pm

Is your Group Rep-
resented at the Inter-
group Delegates
Meeting?

If you don't attend
you can't vote...

If you don't vote you
don't have a voice..



Come find out what's
going on in our area

2nd Thursday of the
month St. Joan of
Arc Church Lincoln
Street Worcester
7:00 -8:30 PM

We counted 150
Groups in Worcester
area only about 20
are represented

Check the bulletin board for
meeting changes and new
meetings in our area On Inter-
group's web page

WWW.aaworcester.org

W.A. I. Needs your help!
There are service positions that are unfilled.
Join us the 2nd Thursday of each month 7:00pm
St. Joan of Arc Church Lincoln Street ____come see where you
can help! Elections of New Officers & Committee Chairs this
Fall !! Please Join us !!

**The Halt-Line still has 15 hours of
unmanned phone time....can you
spare an hour?**
Call the Haltline Chair
[redacted] **for more info**

Women's Meeting Big Book (tapes)
Thursdays 5:30—6:45 PM
Calvary Retreat House South Street
Shrewsbury, MA.

New Meeting:
BBSS
Lakeview Congregational
Church 115 Coburn Ave.
Worcester, Ma.
Wednesday's
7:00-8:30PM

New Meeting:
"In the Wind" has Moved from District 23
(Framingham) to District 25 (Worcester)
Holy Angles Church 1 Milford Rd. (Rt. 140)
Upton Ma. Fridays 8:00PM

**In-Mates At Worcester House
Of Correction** are looking for
people to write to them, or send
them literature if you are inter-
ested ...and are willing to help
carry the message....
email : Beacon@aaworcester.org

NEW MEETING
Big Book Thumpers
Thursday Night 7:30-9:00pm
arrive before 7:30 doors lock.
Calvary Retreat House
59 South St. Shrewsbury

**Uxbridge—New Meeting— Big Book
(Tapes)**
Church of the Nazarene
Douglas Road
Saturday Nights 7:00-8:00PM

W.A.I. - Social Committee:
Check the Website for up to the minute information
www.aaworcester.org or Email: social@aaworcester.org
Check it out and see what fun events they have planned !

**To find out about social
events in District 26 (North
& west of Worcester) check
out their unofficial web site:**
www.26ac.org

Space available for meetings:I am the clerk for St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Hudson
MA. We value the work that AA does in our community and would like to know if we
might be able to offer our space for meetings. Please let us know if you feel there
is a need for more meeting space in our area and if so, how we would go about of-
fering our site.If interested contact the Intergroup office or email the
Beacon.