

This is a list of all the extracts concerning the Traditions from:
AA SERVICE MANUAL
AA TODAY
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE
PASS IT ON
THE A.A. SERVICE MANUAL
THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART
TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE

The Traditions themselves outline the general basis on which we may best conduct our services. The Traditions express the principles and attitudes of prudence that make for harmony.

The A.A. Service Manual, page 62, paragraph 3, lines 5-7

The Twelve Traditions communicate our principles of unity as the Twelve Steps communicate our principles of recovery. The Traditions show how an AA member can best relate himself to his group, the group to other groups, and AA as a whole to the world around us. They show what AA membership is; they reveal AA's experience in matters of authority and money; they guard against compromising alliances, professionalism, and our very natural desires for personal public acclaim.

AA Today: page 10, paragraph 10, lines 3-12

...it was the Traditions which finally brought order, coherence, and effective functioning out of the noisy anarchy which for a time threatened us with collapse.

The Traditions are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. No sanctions or punishments can be invoked for their infraction. Perhaps in no other area of society would these principles succeed. Yet in this fellowship of alcoholics the unenforceable Traditions carry a power greater than that of law.

AA Today: page 10, paragraph 10, lines 17-20 & page 11, paragraph 1, lines 1-6

We obey our Traditions willingly because of the need for AA survival. We obey them because we ought to and because we want to. Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in sacrificial love.

AA Today: page 11, paragraph 1, lines 10-15

1946 The Twelve Traditions of A.A. first formulated and published

1950, July First International Convention at Cleveland. The Twelve Traditions adopted by the movement

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page viii, lines 1,28,29, 32-34

...the A.A. Traditions were beaten out on the anvils of group experience.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 2, paragraph 1, lines 6 & 7

...it was made clear that all this old-time grief and uproar had actually been very good for us and that without this experience A.A.'s Twelve Traditions could never have been written.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 43, paragraph 1, lines 8-10

...those Twelve Traditions still on my mind. Each of them I saw is an exercise in humility that can guard us in everyday A.A. affairs and protect us from ourselves. If A.A. were really guided by the Twelve Traditions, we could not possibly be split by politics, religion, money, or by any old-timers who might take a notion to be big shots. With none of us throwing our weight in public, nobody could possibly exploit A.A. for personal advantage, that is sure. For the first time I saw A.A.'s anonymity for what it really is. It isn't just something to save us from alcoholic shame and stigma; its deeper purpose is actually to keep those fool egos of ours from running hog wild after money and public fame at A.A.'s expense. It really means personal and group sacrifice for the benefit of all A.A.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 43, paragraph 2, lines 2-13

Today we in A.A. are together, and we know we are going to stay together. We are at peace with each other and with the world around us. So many of our conflicts are resolved that our destiny seems secure. The problems of yesterday have produced the blessings of today.

Ours is not the usual success story; rather it is the story of how, under God's grace, an unsuspected strength has arisen out of great weakness; of how, under treats of disunity and collapse, worldwide unity and brotherhood have been forged. In the course of this experience we have evolved a set of traditional principles by which we live and work together and relate ourselves as a fellowship to the world around us. These principles are called the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. They represent the distilled experience of our past, and we rely on them to carry us in unity through the challenges and dangers which the future may bring.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 79, paragraphs 1 & 2

...those Twelve Traditions, the vital principles upon which the survival of Alcoholics Anonymous so heavily depends.

Implicit throughout A.A.'s Traditions is the confession that our fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and that these defects threaten us continually. Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The Twelve Traditions are to group survival and harmony what A.A.'s Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.

But the Twelve Traditions also point straight at many of our individual defects. By implication they ask each of us to lay aside pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice. They ask us never to use the A.A. name in any quest for personal power or distinction or money. The Traditions guarantee the quality of all members and the independence of all groups. They show how we may best relate ourselves to each other and to the world outside. They indicate how we can best function in harmony as a great whole. For the sake of the welfare of our entire society, the Traditions ask that every individual and every group and every area in A.A. shall lay aside all desires, ambitions, and untoward actions that could bring serious division among us or lose for us the confidence of the world at large.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous symbolize the sacrificial character of our life together and they are the greatest force for unity that we know.

Take Tradition One. It says that "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." Probably no society sets a higher value on the personal welfare of the individual member than does A.A. But long ago we found that the common welfare had to come first; without it there could be mighty little personal welfare. In the beginning we felt very much like Eddie Rickenbacker and his company when their plane crashed in the Pacific. They had been saved from death but found themselves still floating upon a dangerous sea. There was no doubt in their minds that the common welfare came first. Nobody dared rock that raft, lest they all perish. Bread and water were shared equally; there were no gluttons.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 96, paragraph 2, lines 5 & 6, paragraphs 3 & 4 & page 97, paragraphs 1 & 2

Pride and fear and anger--these are the prime enemies of our common welfare. True brotherhood, harmony, and love, fortified by clear insights and right practices, are the only answers. And the purpose of A.A.'s traditional principles is to bring these forces to the top and keep them there. Only then can our common welfare be served; only then can A.A.'s unity become permanent.

Now let us think about 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."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 98, paragraphs 2 & 3, lines 1-4

A.A.'s group conscience can be the only ultimate authority in our affairs.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 98, paragraph 3, lines 6 & 7

...the ultimate authority must speak through the groups.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 99, paragraph 2, lines 7 & 8

...the now proven fact that the conscience of the group, when properly informed of the facts and issues and principles involved, was often wiser than any leader.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 99, paragraph 3, lines 1-3

..."God, speaking in the group conscience, is to be our final authority." Clearly implied in these three embryo principles of tradition was a fourth: "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 101, paragraph 5, lines 4-7

Tradition Three for a long time was a puzzler, too: "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a sincere desire to stop drinking."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 102, paragraph 1, lines 1 & 2

Now here comes Tradition Four. It declares that, "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 103, paragraph 1

Services, yes. But government, no.

Hence, A.A.'s Tradition of group autonomy. It didn't take long to formulate that one. They told us just what they wanted, and that included the right to be wrong.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 103, paragraph 2, line 9 & paragraph 3

...in its original "long form," Tradition Four declares: "Any two or three gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation." This means that these two or three alcoholics could try for sobriety in any way they liked. They could disagree with any or all A.A. principles and still call themselves an A.A. group.

But this ultra-liberty is not so risky as it looks. In the end the innovators would have to adopt A.A. principles—at least some of them—in order to remain sober at all. If, on the other hand, they found something better than A.A., or if they were able to improve on our methods, then in all probability we would adopt what they discovered for general use everywhere. This sort of liberty also prevents A.A. from becoming a frozen set of dogmatic principles that could not be changed even when obviously wrong.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 104, paragraph 6, lines 2-7 & page 105, paragraph 1, lines 1-8

Other societies have to have law and force and sanction and punishment, administered by authorized people. Happily for us, we found we need no human authority whatever. We have two authorities which are far more effective. One is benign, the other malign. There is God, our Father, who very simply says, "I am waiting for you to do My will." The other authority is named John Barleycorn, and he says, "You had better do God's will or I will kill you." And sometimes he does kill. So, when all the chips are down, we conform to God's will or perish. At this level, the death sentence hangs over the A.A. member, his group, and A.A. as a whole. Therefore we have the full benefits of the murderous political dictatorships of today but none of their liabilities. So there is authority enough, love enough, and punishment enough, all without any human being clutching the handles of power. Such is A.A.'s backstop against dissolution, and its final guarantee of survival under any conditions. For us, it is do or die.

But this is not the whole story. As our individual and group development progresses, we begin to obey the A.A. Traditions for other reasons. We begin to obey them because we think they are right for us. We obey these principles because we think they are good principles, even though we still resist somewhat. Then comes the final level of obedience, the best of all. We obey A.A.'s Steps and Traditions because we really want them for ourselves. It is no longer a question of good or evil; we conform because we genuinely want to conform. Such is our process of growth in unity and in function. Such is the evidence of God's grace and love among us.

Much of our discussion so far leads straight to Tradition Five, which states: "Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

We think we should do one thing well rather than many things to which we are not called. That is the central idea of this Tradition. Our society gathers in unity around this concept. The very life of our fellowship requires its preservation.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 105, paragraph 2, lines 2-16 & page 106, paragraphs 1,2 & 3, lines 1-4

A logical outgrowth of Tradition Five, Tradition Six reads: "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."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 107, paragraph 2

...A.A.'s Tradition Seven now reads: "Every A.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Tradition Eight says that "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 114, paragraph 2, lines 8-10 & paragraph 3

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

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 118, paragraph 1, lines 1-3

Unless each A.A. member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps of recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant. Drunkenness and disintegration are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they are results of personal disobedience to spiritual principles. We must obey certain principles, or die.

The same stern threat applies to the group itself. Unless there is approximate conformity to A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, the group too can deteriorate and die. So we of A.A. 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 A.A.'s disciplinarians; we have no others.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 119, paragraph 2, lines 6-11 & paragraph 3

While A.A. has to function, it must at the same time avoid wealth, prestige, and power, three great dangers which necessarily tempt nearly all human societies. Though Tradition Nine at first seems to deal with purely practical matters, it embodies a deep spirituality in its actual operation. A.A. is a society without organization, animated only by the spirit of service--a true fellowship.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 120, paragraph 3

We think the future safety of Alcoholics Anonymous greatly depends upon Tradition Ten, A.A.'s principle of no controversy at the public level. This Tradition reads as follows: "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

Since it began Alcoholics Anonymous never has been divided by a major controversial issue.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 123, paragraph 1, paragraph 2, lines 1 & 2

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

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 128, paragraph 1, lines 1-3

Tradition Eleven grew out of a large and strenuous public relations experience. Today, it reads as follows: "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."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 128, paragraph 2

...It is better to let our friends recommend us.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 131, paragraph 1, lines 12 & 13

...A.A.'s Tradition Eleven was developed. To us it represents more than a sound public relations policy. It is more than a denial of self-seeking. Tradition Eleven is certainly a constant reminder that personal ambition has no place in A.A., but it also implies that each member ought to become an active guardian of our fellowship in its relation with the general public.

As we have seen, anonymity is the protective mantle that covers our whole society. But it is more than protection; it has another dimension, a spiritual significance. And this leads to Tradition Twelve, which reads: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 131, paragraph 2, lines 1-6 & paragraph 3

I am positive that A.A.'s anonymity is the key to long-time survival. The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because A.A.'s Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit, well symbolized by anonymity, is the foundation of all these Traditions. It is A.A.'s proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people high confidence in our future.

But in the beginning anonymity was not born of confidence; it was the child of our early fears. Our first nameless groups of alcoholics were secret societies. New prospects could find us only through a few trusted friends. The bare hint of publicity, even when it was not for ourselves but for our work, shocked us. Although we were no longer drinking, we still thought we had to hide from public distrust and contempt.

When the Big Book appeared in 1939, we called it Alcoholics Anonymous. Its original Foreword made this revealing statement: "It is important that we remain anonymous because we are too few, at present, to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals which may result from this publication. Being mostly business or professional folks, we could not well carry on our occupations in such an event." Between these lines it is easy to read our fear that large numbers of incoming people might break our anonymity wide open.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 131, paragraph 3, lines 8 & 9 & page 132, paragraphs 1-3

Today I hope I have come to a time in my A.A. life when I can obey because I really want to obey, because I really want the Traditions for myself as well as for A.A. as a whole. Therefore each of our Twelve Traditions is really an expression of the deflation that each of us has to take, of the sacrifice that we shall all have to make in order to live and work together.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 136, paragraph 1, lines 1-6

THE A.A. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE

(As expressed in the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Steps)

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

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting.

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional.

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

Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

We try to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 138, paragraphs 1- 8

Finding answers to these public relations puzzlers has been a long process. After much trial and error, sometimes punctuated by painful mistakes, the attitudes and practices that would work best for us emerged. The basic ones can be seen today in the A.A. Traditions: 100 per cent anonymity at the public level; no use of the A.A. name for the benefit of other causes, however worthy; no endorsements or alliances; the carrying of the message as the single purpose for Alcoholics Anonymous; no professionalism; public relations by the principle of attraction rather than promotion--these were some of the hard-learned lessons.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 198, paragraph 1

The basic ideas for the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous came directly out of this vast correspondence. In late 1945 a good A.A. friend suggested that all this mass of experience might be codified into a set of principles which could offer tested solutions to all our problems of living and working together and of relating our society to the world outside. If we had become sure enough of where we really stood on such matters as membership, group autonomy, singleness of purpose, non-endorsement of other enterprises, professionalism, public controversy, and anonymity in its several aspects, then such a set of principles could be written. A code of traditions could not, of course, ever become rule or law. But it might act as a guide for our Trustees, Headquarters people, and especially for A.A. groups with growing pains.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 203, paragraph 2

The Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous were first published in the so-called "long form" in the Grapevine of May, 1946.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 203, paragraph 3, lines 2-4

...it was recognized that the Twelve Traditions were going to be just as necessary to the life of the our society as the Twelve Steps were to the life of each member. We saw that the A.A. Traditions were the key to the unity, the functioning, and even the survival of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In reality I had not been the author of the Traditions at all. I had merely put them on paper in such a way as to mirror principles which had already been developed in A.A. group experience.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 204, paragraph 3, lines 1-5 & paragraph 4, lines 1-3

The Traditions are also part of a non-miracle aspect of A.A. They represent, as Bill has said, the meanings and the lessons of experience. They serve as guides for the inexperienced.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 250, paragraph 3, lines 1-3

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

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 286, paragraph 1, lines 5 & 6

Our textbook, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, states that, "anonymity is the greatest protection our society can ever have." It also says that, "the spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 287, paragraph 1

Just as sacrifice meant survival for the individual, so did sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for A.A.'s entire fellowship.

Viewed in this light, A.A.'s Twelve Traditions are little else than a list of sacrifices which the experience of twenty years has taught us that we must make, individually and collectively, if A.A. itself is to stay alive and healthy.

In our Twelve Traditions we have set our faces against nearly every trend in the outside world. We have denied ourselves personal government, professionalism, and the right to say who our members shall be. We have abandoned do-goodism, reform, and paternalism. We refuse outside charitable money and have decided to pay our own way. We will co-operate with practically everybody, yet we decline to marry our society to anyone. We abstain from public controversy and will not quarrel among ourselves about those things that so rip society asunder: religion, politics, and reform. We have but one purpose, to carry the A.A. message to the sick alcoholic who wants it.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: page 287, paragraph 9, lines 5-7 & page 288, paragraphs 1 & 2

The name "Traditions," however, would come a bit later. At first, he dubbed them, "Twelve Points to Assure Our Future," because he saw them as guidelines necessary to the survival, unity, and effectiveness of the Fellowship. Under that title, they were first published in the April 1946 issue of the Grapevine.

Pass It On: page 306, paragraph 2, lines 1-6

...The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because A.A.'s Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit--well symbolized by anonymity--is the foundation of them all. It is A.A.'s proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people their high confidence in our future.

Pass It On: page 308 paragraph 1, lines 2-7

...The tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous--our only means of self-government...

Pass It On: page 312, paragraph 1, line 1

...the Traditions evolved from Bill's personal experience and the experience of the Fellowship, as well as from the mistakes made by earlier institutions and movements, the history of which Bill had studied.

Pass It On: page 322, paragraph 7, lines 1-4

...First Legacy to A.A. was Recovery, embodied in the Big Book, in the Steps, and in person-to-person Twelve Step work.

The second Legacy to A.A. was Unity. This Bill had realized when he said, "We can do together what I cannot do alone"--it was vital that A.A.'s stay together. To insure A.A. unity, Bill had written the Twelve Traditions.

And now, with his penchant for symbolism, he had coined a third term to make A.A. Legacies three in number. The Third Legacy was--what else? Service.

Pass It On: page 347, paragraph 1, lines 1-3 & paragraph 2 & 3, lines 1-3

The Washingtonian Society was an organization that flourished in the 1840's but quickly failed because of some of its own practices. Bill wrote: "At first, the society was composed entirely of alcoholics trying to help one another. The early members foresaw that they should dedicate themselves to this sole aim...Had they been left to themselves, and had they stuck to their one goal, they might have found the rest of the answer abolition of slavery, for example, was a stormy political issue then. Soon, Washingtonian speakers violently and publicly took sides on this question. [They] completely lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics." Bill saw Traditions Ten and Five as A.A.'s safeguards against the Washingtonians' fate.

Pass It On: page 366, footnote 2

Finding the right answers to all our public relations puzzlers has been a long process. After much trial and error, sometimes punctuated by painful mistakes, the attitudes and practices that would work best for us emerged. The important ones can today be seen in our A.A. Traditions.

The A.A. Service Manual: page 12, paragraph 3, lines 1-4

...a common body of guiding principles and an effective policy...

The Language of the Heart: page 1, paragraph 2, lines 7 & 8

Our experience has taught us that:

1. 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 the individual welfare follows close afterward.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.
3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover.
4. ...our common welfare is paramount.
5. 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.

An AA group may cooperate with anyone, but should bind itself to no one.

Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

...personal Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for ...true leaders in AA are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion.

...the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a truly humble modesty.

The Language of the Heart: page 22, paragraphs 1,2 & 3, lines 1,2, paragraph 5, line 7, paragraphs 6 & 7, lines 12,13, paragraph 8, lines 8-10, page 23, paragraph 1, line 6, paragraph 2, lines 12-14, paragraph 4, lines 3,4 & paragraph 5, lines 1-4

Tested by time, that policy, if sound, will become AA Tradition.

The Language of the Heart: page 44, paragraph 1, lines 5 & 6

Our AA experience has taught us that:

1. 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.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.

3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover.

The Language of the Heart: page 68, paragraphs 3,4,5 & 6 lines 1 & 2

...if we intelligently use the experience we've already had, our newer groups ought easily avoid these growing pains.

The Language of the Heart: page 71, paragraph, 2, lines 2 & 3

...An AA group, as such, should never go into business...

The Language of the Heart: page 71, paragraph 4, lines 3 & 4

...An AA group may cooperate with anyone, but such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, express or implied.

The Language of the Heart: page 71, paragraph 4, lines 9-11

Tradition One states: "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." Tradition Two states: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.

The Language of the Heart: page 80, paragraph 1, lines 2-8

Though such an absurd procedure would be miles outside our Tradition, the group's "right to be wrong" would be held inviolate.

The Language of the Heart: page 80, paragraph 3, lines 8-10

One may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless; vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level; and to each of us a constant reminder that principles come before personal interest--such is the wide scope of this all-embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement; at a deeper spiritual level it points us to still greater self-renunciation.

The Language of the Heart: page 92, paragraph 6

A glance at the Twelve Traditions will instantly assure anyone that "giving up" is the essential idea of them all. In each Tradition, the individual or the group is asked to give up something for our general welfare. Tradition One asks us to place the common good ahead of personal desire. Tradition Two asks us to listen to God as he may speak in the group conscience. Tradition Three requires that we exclude no alcoholic from AA membership. Tradition Four implies that we abandon all idea of centralized human authority or government. But each group is enjoined to consult widely in matters affecting us all. Tradition Five restricts the AA group to a single purpose, carrying our message to other alcoholics.

Tradition Six points at the corroding influence of money, property, and personal authority; it begs that we keep these influences at a minimum by separate incorporation and management of our special services. It also warns against the natural temptation to make alliances or give endorsements. Tradition Seven states that we had best pay our own bills; that large contributions or those carrying obligations ought not be received; that public solicitation using the name Alcoholics Anonymous is positively dangerous. Tradition Eight forswears professional zing our Twelve Step work but it does guarantee our few paid service workers an unquestioned amateur status. Tradition Nine asks that we give up all idea of expensive organization; enough is needed to permit effective work by our special services--and no more. This Tradition breathes democracy; our leadership is one of service and it is rotating; our few titles never clothe their holders with arbitrary personal authority; they hold authorizations to serve, never to govern. Tradition Ten is an emphatic restraint of serious controversy; it implores each of us to take care against committing AA to the fires of reform, political or religious dissension. Tradition Eleven asks, in our public relations, that we be alert against sensationalism and it declares there is never need to praise ourselves. Personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film is urgently required, thus avoiding the pitfall of vanity, and the temptation through broken anonymity to link AA to other causes.

Tradition Twelve, in its mood of humble anonymity, plainly enough comprehends the preceding eleven. The Twelve Points of Traditions are little else than a specific application of the spirit of the Twelve Steps of recovery to our group life and to our relations with society in general. The recovery steps would make each individual AA whole and one with God; the Twelve Points of Tradition would make us one with each other and whole with the world about us. Unity is our aim.

Our AA Traditions are, we trust, securely anchored in those wise precepts: charity, gratitude, and humility. Nor have we forgotten prudence. May these virtues ever stand clear before us in our meditations; may Alcoholics Anonymous serve God in happy unison for so long as he may need us.

The Language of the Heart: pages 93 & 94, paragraph 1

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are a distillate of our experience of living and working together. They apply the spirit of Twelve recovery Steps to our group life and security. They deal with our relations with the world outside and with each other; they state our attitudes toward power and prestige, toward property and money. They would save us from tempting alliances and major controversies; they would elevate principles far above personal ambitions. And as a token of this last, they request that we maintain personal anonymity before the open public as a protection to AA and as proof of the fact that our Society intends to practice true humility.

The Language of the Heart: page 96, paragraph 1

That, touching all matters affecting AA unity, our common welfare should come first; that AA has no human authority--only God as he may speak in our group conscience; that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern; that any alcoholic may become an AA member if he says so—we exclude no one; that every AA group may manage its own affairs as it likes, provided surrounding groups are not harmed thereby; that we AA's have but a single aim, the carrying of our message to the alcoholic who still suffers; that in consequence we cannot finance, endorse, or otherwise lend the name 'Alcoholics Anonymous' to any other enterprise, however worthy; that AA, as such, ought to remain poor, lest problems of property, management, and money divert us from our sole aim; that we ought to be self-supporting, gladly paying our small expenses ourselves; that AA should remain forever nonprofessional, ordinary Twelve Step work never to be paid for; that, as a Fellowship, we should never be organized but may nevertheless create responsible service boards or committees to insure us better propagation and sponsorship and that these agencies may engage full-time workers for special tasks; that our public relations ought to proceed upon the principle of attraction rather promotion, it being better to let our friends recommend us; that personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and pictures ought to be strictly maintained as our best protection against the temptations of power or personal ambition; and finally, that anonymity before the general public is the spiritual key to all our Traditions, ever reminding us we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This is 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.

The Language of the Heart: page 121, paragraph 1

Our Traditions are set down on paper. But they were written first in our hearts. For each of us knows, instinctively I think, that AA is not ours to do with as we please. We are but caretakers to preserve the spiritual quality of our Fellowship; keep it whole for those who will come after us and have need of what has so generously been given to us.

The Language of the Heart: page 124, paragraph 3

...these three Legacies--the Twelve Steps of recovery, the Twelve Traditions, and now the general services of Alcoholics Anonymous. Two of these Legacies have long been in your keeping. By the Twelve Steps we have recovered from alcoholism; by the Twelve Traditions we are achieving a fine unity.

The Language of the Heart: page 126, paragraph 2, lines 2-6

So it is that by the Steps we have recovered, by the Traditions we have unified, and by our Headquarters services we have been able to function as a Society.

The Language of the Heart: page 127, paragraph 3

By our Twelve Steps we have recovered, by our Twelve Traditions we have unified, and through our Third Legacy--Service--we shall carry the AA message down through all the corridors of time to come.

The Language of the Heart: page 134, paragraph 5, lines 1-3

...all this mass of experience might be codified into a set of general principles: principles simply stated which could offer tested solutions to all of AA's problems of living and working together and of relating our Society to the world outside. If we had become sure enough of where we stood on such matters as membership, group autonomy, singleness of purpose, non-endorsement of other enterprises, professionalism, public controversy, and anonymity in its several aspects, then such a code of principles

could be written. Such a traditional code could not, of course, ever become rule or law. But it could act as a sure guide...

The Language of the Heart: page 154, paragraph 3, lines 4-12

Of course, I realized that I had not been the actual author of the Traditions. I had merely mirrored principles which had already been hammered out on thousands of anvils of AA group experience.

The Language of the Heart: page 155, paragraph 4, lines 1-3

From 1940 to 1950, we were beset by group problems of every sort, frightening beyond description. Out of these experiences the Twelve Traditions of AA were forged--Traditions that now protect us against ourselves and the world outside.

The Language of the Heart: page 167, paragraph 8, lines 1-4

...The Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous--our only means of self-government--entreats each member to avoid all that particular kind of personal publicity or distinction which might link his name with our Society in the general public mind. AA's Tradition Twelve reads as follows: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

The Language of the Heart: page 207, paragraph 1, lines 1-6

...AA's Twelve Traditions are little else than a list of sacrifices which the experience of twenty years has taught us that we must make, individually and collectively, if AA itself is to stay alive and healthy.

In our Twelve Traditions we have set our faces against nearly every trend in the outside world.

We have denied ourselves personal government, professionalism, and the right to say who our members shall be. We have abandoned do-goodism, reform, and paternalism. We refuse charitable money and prefer to pay our own way. We will cooperate with practically everybody, yet we decline to marry our Society to anyone. We abstain from public controversy and will not quarrel among ourselves about those things that so rip society asunder--religion, politics, and reform. We have but one purpose: to carry the AA message to the sick alcoholic who wants it.

We take these attitudes not at all because we claim special virtue or wisdom; we do these things because hard experience has told us that we must--if AA is to survive in the distraught world of today. We also give up rights and make sacrifices because we ought to--and, better yet, because we want to. AA is a power greater than any of us; it must go on living or else uncounted thousands of our kind will surely die.

The Language of the Heart: page 211, paragraph 3, lines 1-4 & paragraphs 4,5 & 6, lines 1-6

Let us not suppose for a moment that we recovered alcoholics are so much better or stronger than other folks; or that because in twenty years nothing has ever happened to AA, nothing ever can.

Our really great hope lies in the fact that our total experience, as alcoholics and as AA members has at last taught us the immense power of these forces for self-destruction. These hard-won lessons have made us entirely willing to undertake every personal sacrifice necessary for the preservation of our treasured Fellowship.

This is why we see anonymity at the general public level as our chief protection against ourselves, the guardian of all our Traditions, and the greatest symbol of self-sacrifice that we know.

The Language of the Heart: page 216, paragraph 1, lines 3-5 & paragraphs 2 & 3

...adherence to our hard-won traditional principles is the basis for our unity and the effective carrying of our message...

The Language of the Heart: page 218, paragraph 3, lines 3-5

We keenly realize that the practice of the Twelve Traditions is quite as vital to the life of AA as a whole as is the practice of the Twelve Steps to the life and sobriety of each member.

The Language of the Heart: page 218, paragraph 3, lines 7-9

In AA, the group has strict limitations, but the individual has scarcely any. Remembering to observe the Traditions of anonymity and non-endorsement, the AA member can carry AA's message into every troubled area of this very troubled world.

The Language of the Heart: page 225, paragraph 8

The Traditions are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. No sanctions or punishments can be invoked for their infraction. Perhaps in no other area of society would these principles succeed. Yet in this Fellowship of alcoholics, the unenforceable Traditions carry a power greater than the law.

The Language of the Heart: page 248, paragraph 5, lines 1-5

We obey our Traditions willingly because of the need for AA survival. We obey them because we ought to and because we want to. Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in sacrificial love.

The Language of the Heart: page 248, paragraph 5, lines 7-11

...the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of AA were formulated. Mainly these were principles designed for ego reduction, and therefore for the reduction of our fears.

The Language of the Heart: page 267, paragraph 4, lines 10-13

The practice of AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in our personal lives also brought incredible releases from fear of every description, despite the wide prevalence of formidable personal problems. When fear did persist, we knew it for what it was, and under God's grace we became able to handle it. We began to see each adversity as a God-given opportunity to develop the kind of courage which is born of humility, rather than of bravado.

The Language of the Heart: page 268, paragraph 2, lines 1-7

...all of AA's Twelve Traditions were at first questions of estimate and vision for the future.

The Language of the Heart: page 291, paragraph 2, lines 1 & 2

We began to learn from these experiences. Genuine prudence replaced destructive fear. And out of our collective experience in working and living together there finally emerged the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous...

The Language of the Heart: page 299, paragraph 3, lines 2-5

Each of us must conform reasonably well to AA's Steps and Traditions, or else we shall go mad or die of alcoholism. Therefore the compulsion among most of us to survive and to grow becomes far stronger than the temptation to drink or to misbehave. Literally, we must "do or die." So we make the choice to live. This, in turn, means the choice of AA principles, practices, and attitudes that can salvage us from total disaster by insuring our sobriety. This is our first great and critical choice. Admittedly this is made under the fearful and immediate lash of John Barleycorn, the killer. Plainly enough, this first choice is far more a necessity than it is an act of virtue.

The Language of the Heart: page 301, paragraph 5, lines 1-11

...the substance of our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. In our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions we find twenty-four definitely stated principles. Our Third Legacy includes a charter for world service that provides thousands of general service representatives, hundreds of local committee members, eighty General Service Conference delegates, fifteen General Service Board trustees, together with our Headquarters legal, financial, public relations, editorial experts, and their staffs.

The Language of the Heart: page 304, paragraph 1, lines 2-9

As we contemplate the Traditions we see that they have two main characteristics, and that each of these aspects reinforces the other.

The first aspect of the Twelve Traditions is protection; the second aspect is progress.

The Language of the Heart: page 316, paragraphs 1 & 2, lines 1 & 2

Take Tradition One. It says that AA's common welfare comes first. This really means that our personal ambitions will have to be set aside every time they conflict with the safety or the effectiveness of our Fellowship. It means that we must sometimes love our Society more than ourselves.

The Language of the Heart: page 317, paragraph 3

Let's now examine that vital Tradition Eleven. It deals with our public relations. Here is our greatest channel of communication to the alcoholic who still suffers. Tradition Eleven reads: "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." Since this great Tradition describes the most important application of AA's principle of anonymity, and because it sets the pitch and tone of our entire public relations policy,...

The Language of the Heart: page 319, paragraph 2, lines 1-8

...our Twelve Traditions warn heavily against the perils of concentrated wealth, the vain pursuit of fame, and the ever present temptation to controversy and attack.

The Language of the Heart: page 324, paragraph 4, lines 7-9

The life of each individual and of each group is built around our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We very well know that the penalty for extensive disobedience to these principles is death for the individual and dissolution for the group. An even greater force for A.A.'s unity is the compelling love that we have for our fellow members and for the principles upon which our lives today are founded.

Twelve Concepts For World Service: page 8, paragraph 6, lines 1-6