

## THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF THE TRADITIONS

The Twelve Traditions are often referred to as, "Why it works." They ensure the continuance of A.A. as a whole, by providing guidelines for groups to evaluate their activities and actions. In a practical vein they are, individually and collectively, humility builders for the group; they ask that the group consider its conduct from a broader perspective and, when necessary, give up something for the overall good of A.A.

The Traditions also contain spiritual principles. These principles, when applied in our lives, complement the Steps as a guide to personal recovery. Here, taken from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, (with minor editorial modification) are the spiritual principles of the Traditions that I strive to apply in my daily life:

1. The A.A. member conforms to the principles of recovery; at first because he must, later because he discovers a way of life he really wants to live. (Unity)
2. When we come to understand the wisdom of the group decision and the necessity of patiently awaiting developments, the real and permanent leadership of A.A. can offer the quiet opinion, the sure knowledge and humble example that resolve a crisis, leading by example, rather than driving by mandate. (Group Conscience)
3. When confronted by the fear that is the true basis of intolerance, we need only ask, "What would the Master do?" (Membership)
4. Eventually, we must conform to whatever tested principles guarantee survival. Sobriety must be our sole objective. In all other respects there is perfect freedom of will and action. We have the right to be wrong, but we no longer have the right to harm others. (Autonomy)
5. It is the great paradox of A.A. that we know we can seldom keep the precious gift of sobriety unless we give it away. (Primary Purpose)
6. We are all perfectionists who, failing perfection, have gone to the other extreme. We can not be all things to all men, nor should we try. (Non-Affiliation)
7. We, too, should be self-supporting through our own contributions. Not only is it a responsibility of sobriety, it is essential to our self-esteem. (Self-Supporting)
8. We give freely what has been given freely to us. (Non-Professional)

9. Unless each A.A. member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his death warrant. His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles. (Spirit of Service)

10. We should not back away from our individual responsibility to act as we believe upon the issues of our time, yet self-righteousness should not cause us to enforce our will on others. (Outside Issues)

11. Personal ambition has no place in A.A. There is never need to praise ourselves. (Attraction Rather Than Promotion)

12. The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. We try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as A.A. members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. We are sure that humility, expressed by anonymity, is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have. (Principles Before Personalities)

The spiritual principles of the traditions teach us that, "we are actually 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."

Jack D. (The Home Group)