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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

The *Twelve Traditions* that are often used in *Twelve Step* organizations are also adopted from *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the “Big Book”: *Alcoholics Anonymous, The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism*, published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1976). Since AA’s beginnings in 1935 to the present, the group has expanded from two people to an organization that serves millions worldwide, regardless of race, creed, or language. This growth was not without difficulty; as the group expanded, questions of membership, money, public relations, management and other issues arose. The *Twelve Traditions* were created in 1946 to address these issues. One interesting note is that the *Twelve Traditions* are only traditions, not rules, and have been established through trial and error as an effective means of preserving group integrity. Trial and error has established them as being the best way of preserving the group. Based on AA’s experience, most other *Twelve Step* groups adopt the *Twelve Traditions*.

Although the *Twelve Traditions* apply to the organization rather than the individual, it is vital for the members to be aware of the *Traditions* so that they do not inadvertently endanger their group and, through it, their own recovery. These maps help explore how the *Traditions* can be supported at an individual level. Because the *Traditions* have been adopted by so many different *Twelve Step* groups, the group name and problem area are left blank so that the maps can be personalized as needed.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

Tradition 1

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on _____ unity.
GROUP NAME

Tradition 2

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.

Tradition 3

The only requirement for _____ membership is a desire to stop _____.
GROUP NAME PROBLEM AREA

Tradition 4

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

Tradition 5

Each group has one primary purpose - to carry its message to the _____ who still suffers.
PROBLEM AREA

Tradition 6

An _____ group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the _____ name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
GROUP NAME GROUP NAME

Tradition 7

Each _____ group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
GROUP NAME

Tradition 8

_____ should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
GROUP NAME

Tradition 9

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

Tradition 10

_____ has no opinion on outside issues; hence the _____ name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
GROUP NAME GROUP NAME

Tradition 11

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.

Tradition 12

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

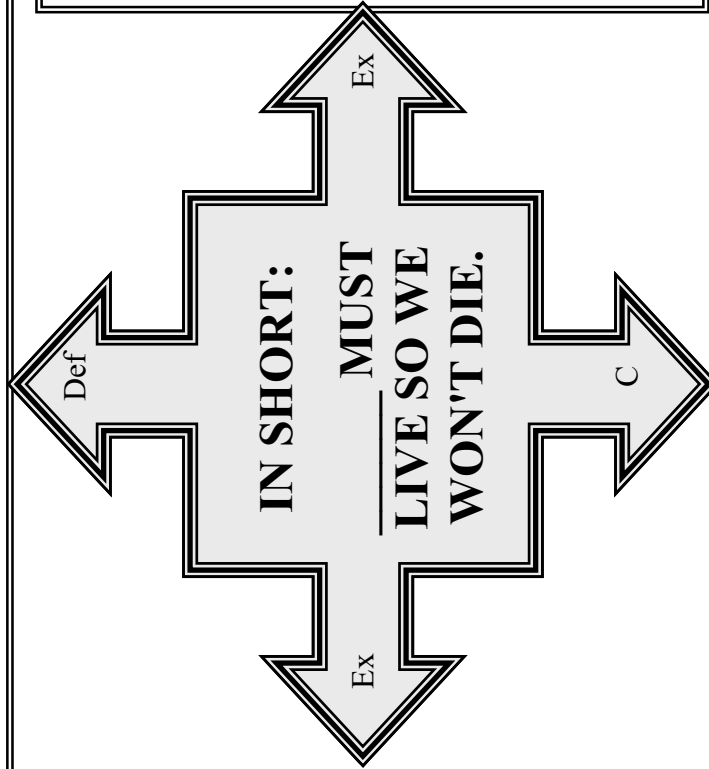
TRADITION 1

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on GROUP NAME unity.

This is what **Tradition 1** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 1**.

These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 1**.



Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 1** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

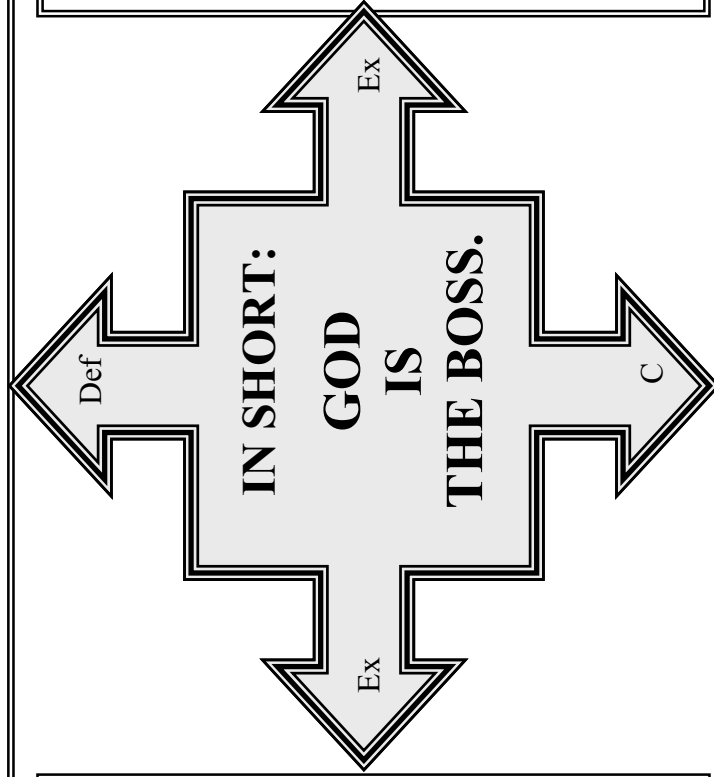
Ex = Example

C = Characteristic

TRADITION 2: 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.

This is what **Tradition 2** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 2**.



These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 2**.

Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 2** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

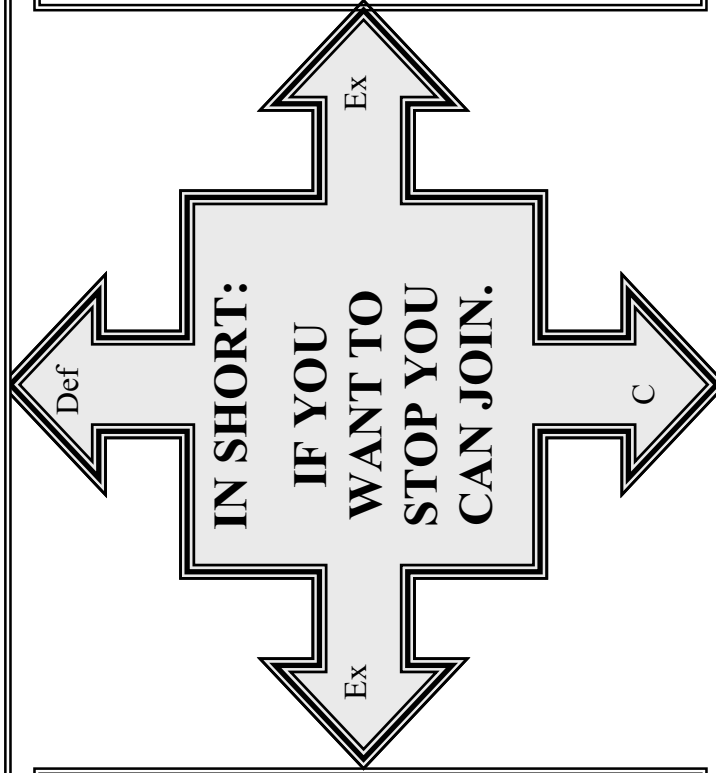
C = Characteristic

TRADITION 3

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop .
GROUP NAME PROBLEM AREA

This is what **Tradition 3** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 3**.



These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 3**.

Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 3** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

C = Characteristic

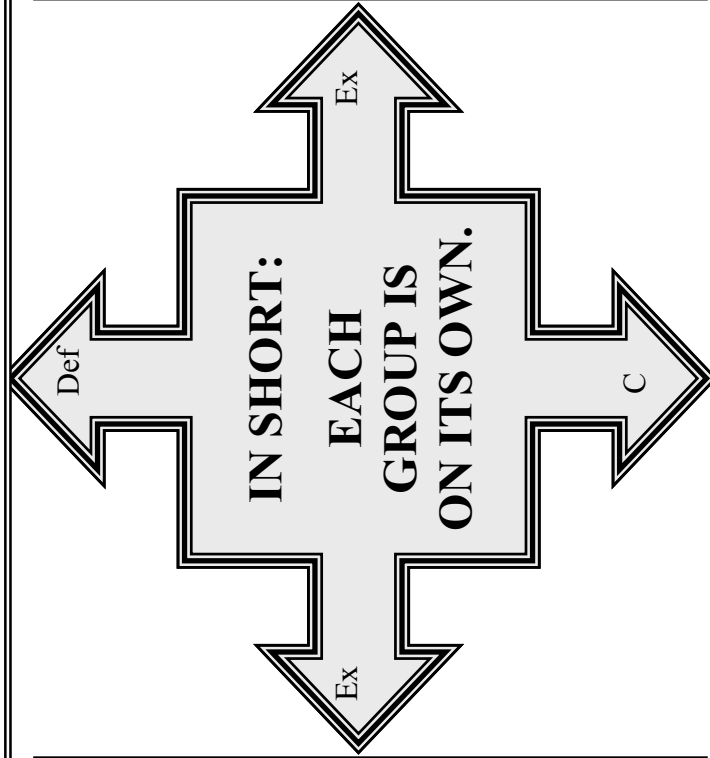
TRADITION 4

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

This is what **Tradition 4** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 4**.

These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 4**.



Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 4** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

C = Characteristic

TRADITION 5

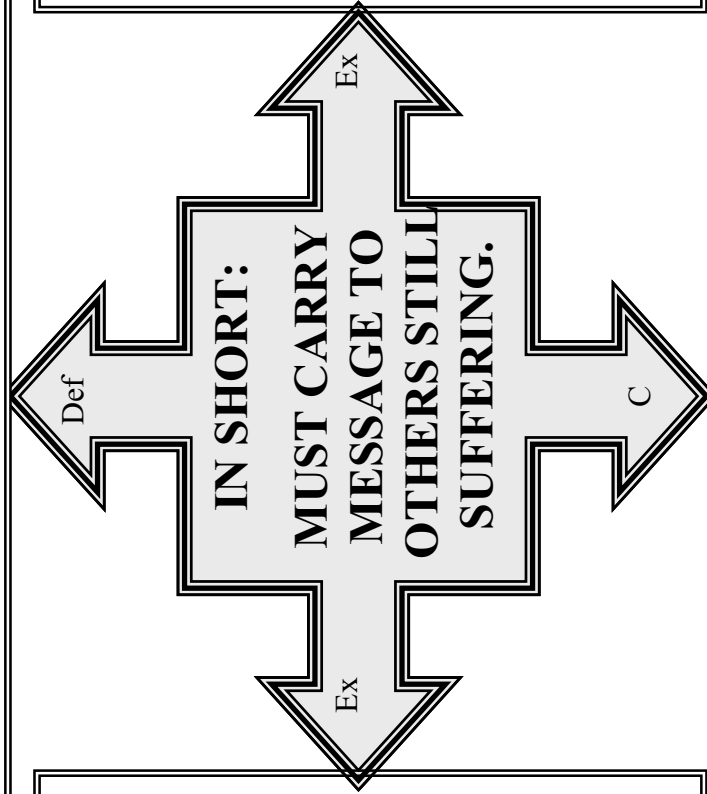
Each group has one primary purpose – to carry its message to the _____
who still suffers.

PROBLEM AREA

This is what **Tradition 5** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 5**.

These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 5**.



Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 5** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

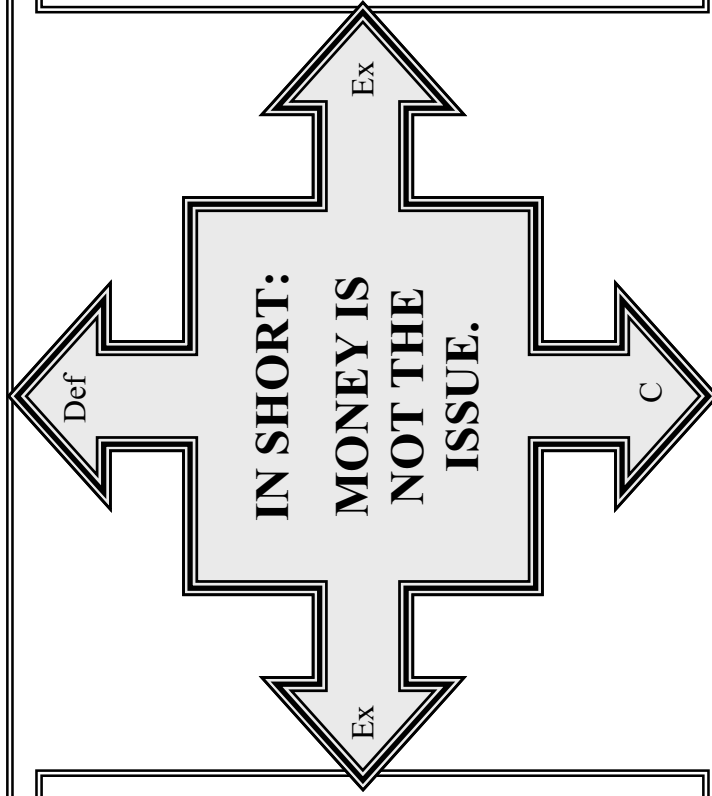
C = Characteristic

TRADITION 6 An _____ group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the
GROUP NAME
group name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

This is what **Tradition 6** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 6**.

These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 6**.



Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 6** (draw or describe).

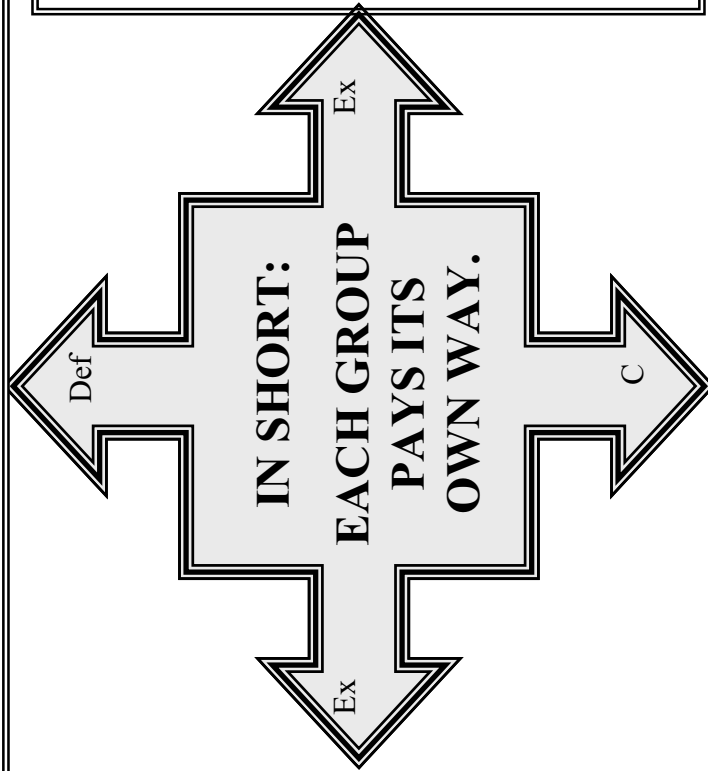
TRADITION 7

Each _____ group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

GROUP NAME

This is what **Tradition 7** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 7**.



These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 7**.

Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 7** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

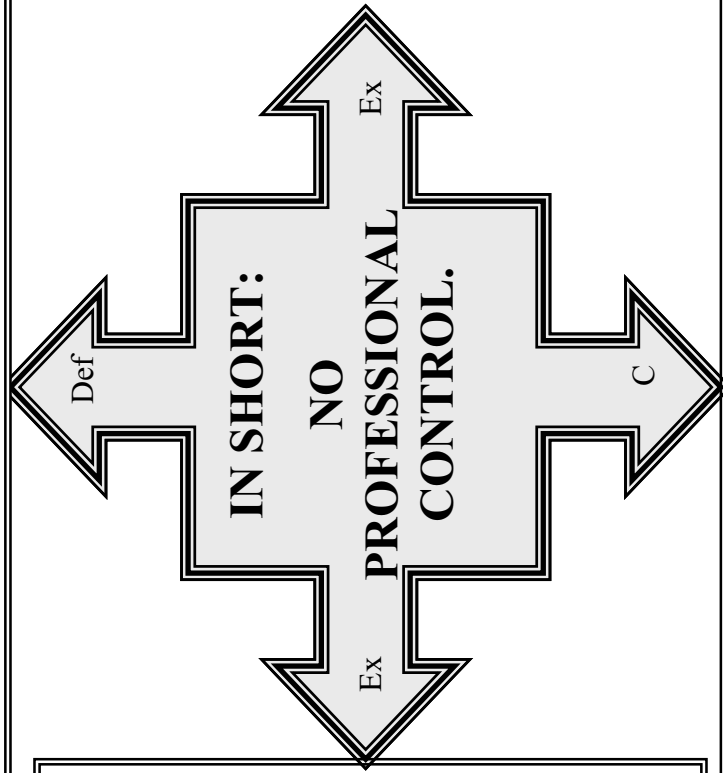
C = Characteristic

TRADITION 8

_____ should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers
GROUP NAME
may employ special workers.

This is what **Tradition 8** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 8**.



These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 8**.

Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 8** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

C = Characteristic

TRADITION 9

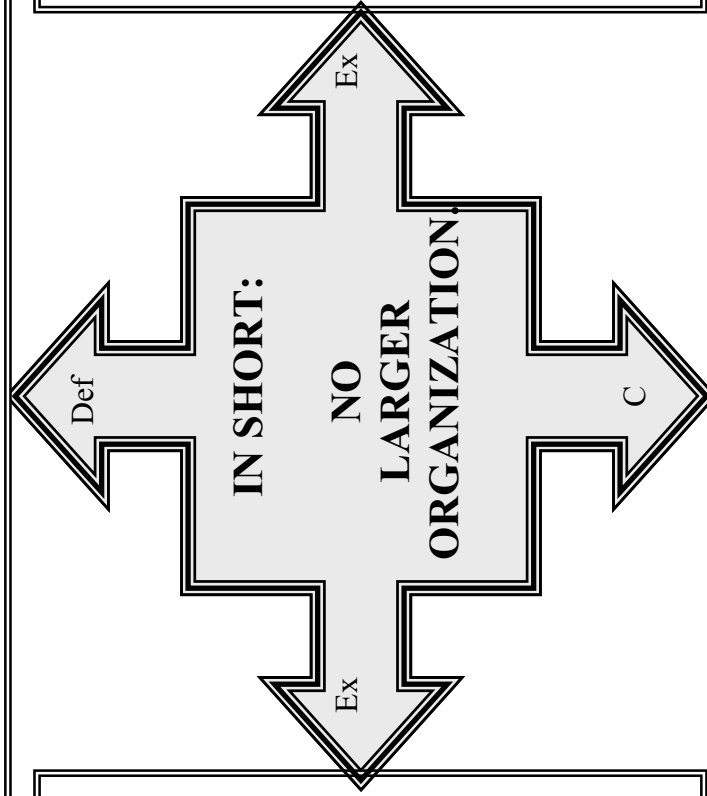
_____, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

GROUP NAME

This is what **Tradition 9** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 9**.

These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 9**.



Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 9** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

C = Characteristic

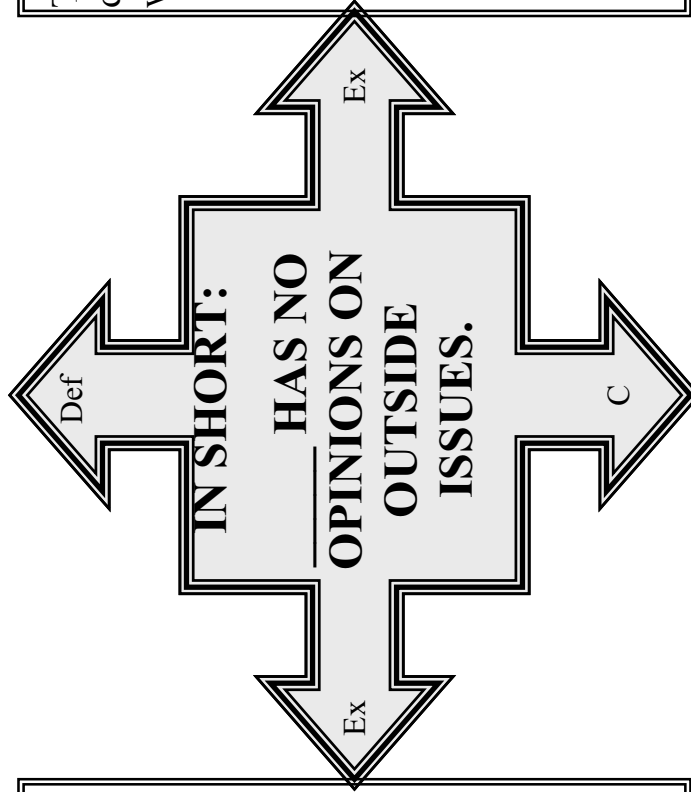
TRADITION 10

_____ has no opinion on outside issues; hence the _____ name ought
GROUP NAME GROUP NAME
never be drawn into public controversy.

This is what **Tradition 10** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 10**.

These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 10**.



Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 10** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

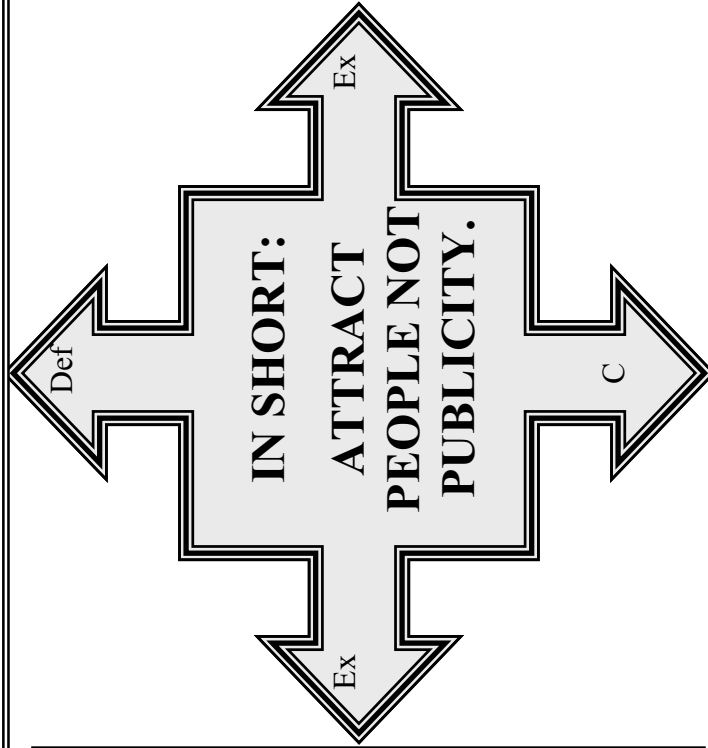
C = Characteristic

TRADITION 11

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.

This is what **Tradition 11** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 11**.



These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 11**.

Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 11** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

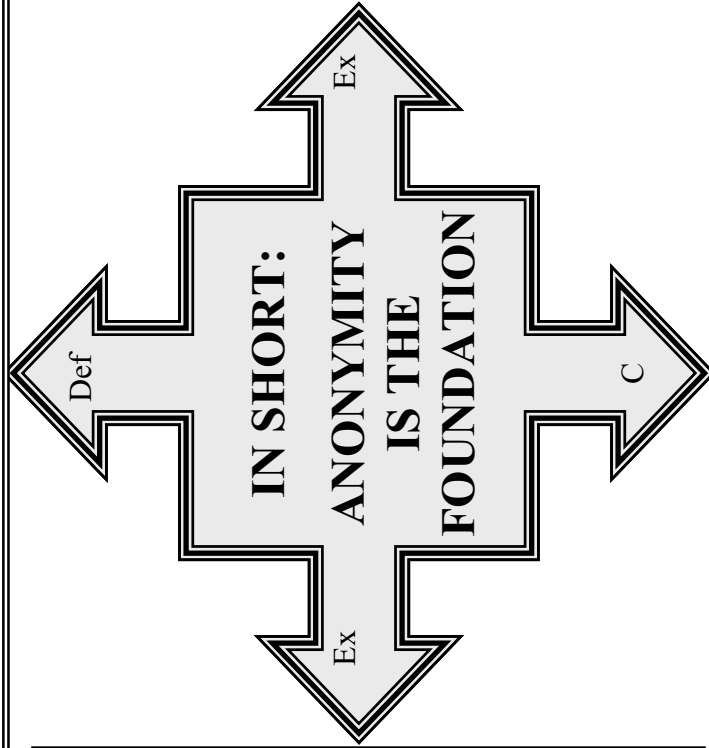
C = Characteristic

TRADITION 12

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

This is what **Tradition 12** means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold **Tradition 12**.



These are things I should avoid doing or encouraging because it would violate **Tradition 12**.

Create a picture to help remember **Tradition 12** (draw or describe).

Def = Definition

Ex = Example

C = Characteristic

Discussion Topics for *the Twelve Tradition* Maps

- **Discuss any new insights you have gained on the meaning or use of the *Twelve Traditions*.**
- **How do the *Twelve Traditions* serve you as an individual member?**
- **Which of the *Twelve Traditions* do you think are the most important? Why?**
- **What things should be avoided in order to maintain the *Twelve Traditions*?**
- **What are the “gray” areas? In what situations is it unclear what the *Twelve Traditions* suggest?**

