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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.

_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 ____________.

_Tradition 4_
Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ________ as a whole.

_Tradition 5_
Each group has one primary purpose - to carry its message to the ____________ who still suffers.

_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.

_Tradition 7_
Each ________ group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

_Tradition 8_
______ should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

_Tradition 9_
______, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

_Tradition 10_
______ has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ________ name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

_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 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.

IN SHORT: __________ MUST LIVE SO WE WON'T DIE.

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

IN SHORT:

GOD IS THE BOSS.
These are things I can do to uphold Tradition 3.

This is what Tradition 3 means to me:

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).
**TRADITION 4**

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

GROUP NAME

This is what Traditon 4 means to me:

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These are things I can do to uphold Traditon 4.

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

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Create a picture to help remember Tradition 4 (draw or describe).
**TRADITION 5**

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

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).
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.

IN SHORT:

MONEY IS NOT THE ISSUE.

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).

Def = Definition    Ex = Example    C = Characteristic
These are things I can do to uphold Tradition 7.

This is what Tradition 7 means to me:

IN SHORT:
EACH GROUP PAYS ITS OWN WAY.

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).
TRADITION 8

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

This is what Tradition 8 means to me:

These are things I can do to uphold Tradition 8.

IN SHORT:

NO PROFESSIONAL CONTROL.

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).
**IN SHORT:**

**NO LARGER ORGANIZATION.**

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).

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

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**TRADITION 9**

____, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
TRADITION 10

_____ has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ____ name ought
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).
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.

IN SHORT:
ATTRACT
PEOPLE NOT
PUBLICITY.

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).
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).
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?
Mapping Your Steps

The Twelve Traditions in Brief

1. MUST LIVE SO WE DON'T DIE

2. GOD IS BOSS

3. IF YOU WANT TO STOP DRINKING YOU CAN JOIN

4. EACH GROUP IS ON ITS OWN

5. MUST CARRY MESSAGE TO OTHERS STILL SUFFERING

6. MONEY IS NOT THE ISSUE

7. EACH GROUP PAYS ITS OWN WAY

8. NO PROFESSIONAL CONTROL

9. NO LARGE ORGANIZATION

10. HAS NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES

11. ATTRACT PEOPLE NOT PUBLICITY

12. ANONYMITY IS THE FOUNDATION

GOD

FOREVER OR R.I.P.