

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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To: The fellowship

From: Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service

Date: September 19, 1989

Re: Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service

In the most recent *Fellowship Report*, we reported that substantial changes were being considered by the committee on their original draft of the "Twelve Principles of Service" which was presented to the 1989 World Service Conference. Enclosed you will find the result of those changes: the **Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service**. This document should receive as wide a distribution as possible. Please copy and pass it on to other service committees and interested members.

While most of the ideas contained in the original "Principles" draft remain, more than the title of the document has been revised. The wording of the Concepts has been reworked, with the hope of better expressing our original intent. The order of the Concepts has been revised. The narrative essays accompanying each Concept have undergone substantial revision.

The Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service contemplates no further revisions of the enclosed draft material prior to the 1990 meeting of the World Service Conference. The committee does expect that fellowship-wide discussion and study of the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service will generate significant input to the committee, which we welcome and encourage on an ongoing basis. Deliberations of the 1990 Conference will quite likely result in further revisions of our current drafts.

One area in which the Principles draft and the Concepts draft differ significantly revolves around the role special workers should play in our services and our service structure. Language from the first draft which included special workers in the application of the Twelve Concepts has been deleted. Further explanation is warranted.

The issue of the role special workers should play in our service structure has been passionately debated within the committee. Some hold that the existence of an employee-employer relationship for the special

worker must preclude their participation in any decision-making process. Others hold that the special worker is a key component of the service team and must be included in the decision-making process. Still others hold viewpoints somewhere between these two extremes. The committee has been unable to reach satisfactory resolution of this conflict within its own membership.

Having admitted its inability to reach consensus on the issue, the committee is choosing to ask the fellowship for guidance. As you review the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service, we ask you to turn an eye to the special worker. What should be the appropriate role for our special workers within our service structure, especially with regards to their impact upon and participation in our decision-making processes? Let us know. We eagerly await your cards and letters.

TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR N.A. SERVICE

The Twelve Traditions of N.A. have guided our groups well in the conduct of their individual affairs, and they have always formed the foundation for N.A. services. They have steered us away from many pitfalls that could have meant our collapse. Our various service units *serve*, for example, they do not *govern*; we stay out of public debate; we neither endorse nor oppose any of the many causes that our members may feel strongly about; our approach to addiction is a non-professional one; we are fully self-supporting. The traditions have provided our fellowship with essential guidance throughout its development, and they continue to be indispensable at every level of service.

The Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service described here are intended to be practically applied to our service structure at every level. The spiritual ideals of our steps and traditions provide the basis for these concepts, which are tailored to the specific needs of the various service boards and committees that make up our service structure. The concepts allow our groups the freedom to more readily achieve our traditions' ideals, and our service structure the freedom to function efficiently and responsibly in the face of the complex realities of the world around us.

When we conscientiously study and apply these concepts, our services are stabilized, much as our steps have stabilized our lives and our traditions have stabilized and unified our groups. It is in this spirit that we present a set of concepts to guide our services and help insure that the message of Narcotics Anonymous is available to all addicts who have a desire to stop using and begin practicing our way of life.

1. The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A. groups.
2. The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole.
3. Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service authority.
4. For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.
5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our decisions.

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6. Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.
7. Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation.
8. All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services.
9. Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
10. Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make petition for the redress of a personal grievance.
11. At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate.
12. Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other.

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1. The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A. groups.

The ultimate authority for Narcotics Anonymous service is "a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." As we shall see in the concepts to follow, the expression of a loving God is sought and respected at all levels of service. Concept One, by affirming the authority of the N.A. groups, calls upon the service structure to be especially responsive to that expression as it occurs at the group level. The First Concept also calls upon the groups to accept and exercise the ultimate responsibility for all services performed in N.A.

The groups support N.A. services in a number of ways. First, they send into the service structure a constant stream of trusted servants. Group service representatives (GSRs), elected directly by each N.A. group, form the foundation of our service structure. By participating in area service, and by attending forums, assemblies, seminars, and workshops at both the area and regional levels, the GSRs provide constant, active influence over the discussions being carried on within the service structure.

A second way in which the groups exercise their responsibility for N.A. services is by providing the funds for those services. Groups send any surplus money they have directly into the service structure. They also purchase and distribute our fellowship's literature, and the proceeds from those literature sales are used to further our primary purpose.

78 Groups further exercise their fundamental responsibility for service by providing
79 services of their own. Meeting places need to be maintained, financial records kept,
80 literature and supplies purchased, and a variety of other group-level responsibilities
81 met. Trusted servants at this level, by providing the atmosphere of personal
82 recovery in our meetings, form the bedrock of our fellowship.

83 The entire N.A. service structure applies this First Concept by remaining
84 responsive to the guidance of the groups. Each level of service is designed so that,
85 as much as possible, the collective voice of the N.A. groups is heard in the decision-
86 making process. Group service representatives form the core of the area service
87 committee. The regional service committee sponsors various events throughout the
88 year that provide opportunities for GSRs to maintain contact with their national
89 service conference delegate, and to remain informed and active in the discussions
90 being carried on at the national level. At regional assemblies, GSRs meet directly
91 with their conference delegate for a thorough and open discussion of current N.A.
92 service issues. In some matters of the highest importance and sensitivity--for
93 example, a proposed change to the Twelve Steps or Twelve Traditions--all
94 registered groups may be directly polled through the mail.

95 Besides those formal ways in which the groups' collective voice provides ongoing
96 influence, more subtle and informal signals may come from the groups to the service
97 structure. Trusted servants serve the groups best by being attentive to these as well.
98 Have group contributions to the rest of the service structure decreased--or
99 increased--lately? What pieces of N.A. literature have the groups been buying--or
100 not buying--of late? Are groups taking part in local fellowship activities? Are the
101 groups sending enough committed members to fully support the service projects that
102 need to get done? If support of that kind is lacking, what kind of improved
103 communication or service might engender more support from the groups?
104 Questions like these, asked by responsible trusted servants when establishing goals
105 and plans for N.A. service, indicate a healthy respect for the role of the groups in
106 guiding our services.

107 The First Concept is being applied to the fullest when groups are actively
108 supportive of the service structure they have created, and when that structure is
109 open and responsive to the guidance of the groups, both direct and indirect.

110
111 **2. The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to**
112 **develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole.**

113 The First Concept says that the groups are ultimately responsible for our services.
114 Yet the issues involved in providing those services worldwide have become
115 increasingly complex, requiring intensive planning and careful, studied execution.
116 Even our local services require a level of involvement that would distract groups
117 from fulfilling their primary purpose. How, then, can the groups give their attention
118 to these responsibilities *and* carry the message to the addict who still suffers? To

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effectively accomplish both of those important functions, the groups focus their own immediate energies on carrying the message of recovery at their meetings, and they delegate much of the remaining responsibility to the service structure.

The first level of that delegation occurs when groups send their GSRs into the service structure. The groups trust those servants to become part of a team, a team which will do what it would not be practical for the groups to do themselves. Together, these trusted servants make up the foundation of the N.A. service structure.

The delegation of service responsibilities throughout this structure requires trust--trust in a group of addicts, many of whom once lived the kinds of lives that did not inspire a great deal of trust. The Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service, however, are firmly rooted in the belief that the steps and traditions work. They express our faith that when we ground our lives individually in those principles, and when at all levels of service we pause to consult a loving God in all matters, then we can come together as a community in a spirit of service, our trust well founded.

Perhaps early in the development of an N.A. community, when most of us are new in this way of life, greater caution about delegation is called for. But as time passes, and our spiritual principles of recovery and unity have had a chance to produce a substantial change in our lives and in the life of our N.A. community, proper delegation becomes an essential part of maintaining effective services. Trust in one another, and in the collective conscience expressed among us when we each individually consult a loving God, is one of our highest spiritual ideals.

These first two concepts provide a basic foundation for service in Narcotics Anonymous. They establish clearly that the N.A. groups bear the responsibility and authority for the service activities of our fellowship, and that the service structure bears the delegated responsibility for performing those services. The rest of the concepts describe the delicate balance of authority and responsibility required at all levels of service for the realization of the ideal described in these first two concepts.

3. Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service authority.

This concept lends greater definition to the kind of delegation called for in Concept Two. When we give responsibilities to our trusted servants, we also grant them the authority necessary to carry out those responsibilities. We look carefully at the amount of responsibility we are placing on a given board, committee, or trusted servant, and then match it with the authority necessary to fulfill it.

By "authority," we do not mean the power to tell someone else what to do. The word authority used in that way would not be consistent with the spiritual principles in our steps, traditions, and concepts for service. Instead, our approach is to build consensus regarding the best direction of our services, and then respect that consensus in taking responsible actions in service to N.A. By "authority," rather, we

mean permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the service tasks for which one is responsible. Authority of this kind originates at the group level, and is granted by the groups to the other levels.

We don't ask a member to chair a committee, and then expect that member to come back to ask our permission or guidance on every decision that must be made in carrying out the work. Instead, when we ask our members to coordinate specific service tasks, we grant them the freedom to make decisions and take actions to a degree that matches the level of responsibility they are given. We then send them to do the work with our blessings and our trust, confident that they will exercise the leadership and judgment needed to serve our fellowship well--confident, because we have taken great care in selecting each one.

The process of determining the degree of responsibility that a given task entails, and establishing clear limits of authority that match it, is one that will vary from committee to committee. The ideal is to maintain the accountability of the committee, board, or trusted servant who has been delegated the authority, and at the same time provide enough latitude so that the work can be done efficiently. The creativity, experience, and willingness of our trusted servants should be tapped to the fullest, while at the same time preserving the delegating body's broader authority.

Accountability can be established readily when a high value is placed on clear, open communication. The delegating body receives thorough reports from those to whom it delegates responsibilities, and those charged with responsibilities seek broad consultation before executing their plans. Good communication is a key factor in effective delegation.

Without the authority to perform the tasks we assign them, our service entities would bear significant responsibilities but have no effective means of fulfilling them. They would be without the capacity to exercise effective leadership. This concept calls us to a higher level of faith and trust. It allows for the exercise of sound judgment, creativity, trust, and faith in the loving God whose expression in the conscience of each trusted servant forms the heart of all our service efforts.

4. For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

There is a challenge in striking a balance between insuring on the one hand that sound decisions are made, reflecting the guidance of a broad-based group conscience, and on the other hand providing services in a decisive, efficient manner. The Twelve Concepts seek to provide a framework in which trusted servants can create and maintain that balance. The Fourth Concept does its part by further refining our approach to effective delegation.

Concept One stresses the responsibility and authority of the N.A. groups, and the responsibility of our service boards and committees to remain attentive to the

groups' needs and concerns. Concept Two provides for delegation by the groups of many of the hands-on service responsibilities to the service structure. Concept Three says that each responsibility delegated throughout the service structure should be matched with enough authority to accomplish it. Now Concept Four says that the authority for making the final decision about each responsibility should be located in a single point.

This concept describes a basic principle of sound decision-making. As we have seen clearly in the discussion of the previous concepts, consultation and careful consideration go into good decisions, with many perspectives coming together in search of the best approach. But ultimately a decision must be made, and someone must be charged with the responsibility to make it.

Accountability in our service structure is also addressed by the Fourth Concept. The single point of decision for any given N.A. service responsibility is not merely a seat of authority. By defining a single point of decision, the delegating body also defines the place where anyone concerned can go for information about the project, and from which regular reports must be issued. The defined point of decision is also the point of accountability; if the delegating body needs to offer redirection for the project, those directions can be given straight to whatever single point of decision has been defined.

Major decisions in N.A. service are usually made by a board or committee, in cooperation and consultation with others. In our service centers, the point of authority for routine management decisions usually rests with a single person. In both cases, the *final* point of decision is a *single* point, though that *single point* is not necessarily a *single person*. Whatever the circumstances, experience suggests that disharmony as well as a lack of accountability results when we expect two boards or committees, or two trusted servants, to have final say in a particular decision.

The application of Concept Four helps us to avoid confusion and disharmony in our service environment. It balances the Twelve Concepts' overall call for substantial consultation and cooperation with the ability to make clear decisions from a single point, a point of accountability as well as of delegated authority. That balance is the cumulative effect of the first four concepts, and is the basis for sound decision-making throughout the N.A. service structure, an ability enhanced and refined by each of the concepts to follow.

5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our decisions.

In Narcotics Anonymous, we believe that group conscience is the means by which a loving God provides guidance to our fellowship. The exercise of group conscience is the act by which our members bring their spiritual recovery directly to bear in resolving issues affecting N.A. services. As such, it is a subject which must necessarily command our most intent consideration.

242 The first stage in the development of group conscience is the application of the
243 steps in the lives of each individual. As our spiritual awakening progresses, we
244 become people of conscience. As we steadily apply spiritual principles in our lives,
245 our decisions and actions increasingly become less motivated by self-interest, and
246 more motivated by what our conscience tells us is good and right. Then, as
247 individuals revive a healthy conscience--one which reflects the guidance of a loving
248 God--they come together to form group conscience. The principle of group
249 conscience is being applied whenever members share with one another their honest
250 reflections, having consulted their conscience.

251 When a single member's understanding is shaped by his conscience, that
252 understanding should influence his important decisions. But in an imperfect world,
253 as a member of the human race, he can never be sure whether his individual
254 reflections on the matter represent only his own thinking, or whether they reflect
255 sound spiritual guidance. When we each share those reflections in a group setting,
256 and we establish a fairly strong consensus, we can be more confident of spiritual
257 guidance. That is the essence of group conscience. It is the means by which we seek
258 the ongoing guidance and influence of our ultimate authority, a loving God. With
259 that kind of process at the foundation of our fellowship's service decisions, we can
260 confidently delegate responsibility and authority for those services to our trusted
261 servants.

262 Group conscience is not a decision-making mechanism. There are many different
263 ways, once group conscience is adequately exercised, for a final decision to be
264 reached. An N.A. group, for example, will exercise group conscience by allowing
265 members to freely share their perspectives before a decision is made. Each
266 individual member, during the exercise of group conscience, is making a clear effort
267 to consult conscience rather than the more ego-driven forces within. Once that
268 discussion has developed a sense of the collective conscience of the group, a sound,
269 spiritually based decision can be made. N.A. groups almost always opt for a purely
270 democratic method--a majority vote--of actually making the final decision.

271 Another example further highlights the difference between group conscience and
272 the decision-making mechanism it influences. Consider the case of a staff meeting
273 at a large N.A. service center. The office manager has an important decision to
274 make. The decision will have significant impact on the office's operations. The
275 issue is raised for broad discussion among the staff. Discussion is vigorous, with
276 several different viewpoints shared. A group conscience is developed. With the
277 insight offered by that group conscience, the manager will make the final decision,
278 and the staff will receive their instructions regarding its implementation. In this
279 case, the decision-making mechanism is "executive authority" rather than "majority
280 rules," but group conscience still plays an important part in making the decision.

281 These two examples are used to demonstrate the clear separation between the
282 expression of group conscience and the particular method used to make a decision.

Individuals who are personally involved in the process of spiritual growth make their best effort to express their conscience to the group. That pooling of conscience in a group setting is the means by which a loving God guides and influences our decisions. Finally, by the method most appropriate to the nature of the body in question, that decision is made.

6. Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.

No group or society can function well without able leadership. N.A. is no exception. Leadership at every level of service is one of our most valued assets. Good leaders may be confident and decisive in taking the actions that serve the fellowship, but they plan thoughtfully and consult thoroughly with others before acting. Leaders in N.A. are not dictators or order-givers; they are servants. Able leadership in the spirit of service does not drive by mandate, demanding conformity; it leads by example, commanding respect.

N.A. leadership begins at the group level, where many thousands of group service representatives (GSRs) are chosen every year. They are the foundation of our service structure. If we are vigilant in choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level of service, the remainder of the structure will almost certainly be sound. From this strong foundation, a service structure can be built that will nourish, inform, and support the groups, as the groups nourish and support the structure.

An N.A. leader is a person who is well versed in this fellowship's principles and policies, and remains consistent with them in taking carefully planned action. He consults with others, and seeks always to establish an appropriate level of consensus before exercising his delegated authority to act on the matters at hand. Good leadership understands that plans and ideas can come from anyone, anywhere. The kind of leader the Sixth Concept refers to is a person of integrity, ready at any time to discard his own ideas and plans for those that are better, crediting the source.

A quality often associated with good leadership is the ability to compromise when compromise is called for. In a society which places a high value on broad consensus in its decision-making process, progress is usually characterized by a series of compromises. Leaders in N.A. watch for opportunities to compromise in ways that will improve our prospects for effective action and increased unity.

A good leader does not, however, compromise blindly. Sometimes he stands up for his convictions, sticking faithfully to his position. Sometimes during a group discussion a member may believe that the majority is on the wrong track; under such circumstances, the lone voice must persist in making the case for sound principle and sound thinking. Our Ninth and Tenth Concepts for N.A. Service provide for the thorough exercise of this kind of leadership. When the appeals are exhausted, and the minority opinion has been considered carefully without prevailing, a good leader also knows how to surrender and accept the decision that has arisen from group

conscience. No matter how right we think we are, our respect for group conscience in N.A. must always prevail.

The ability to accept criticism is another characteristic of good leadership. Constructive criticism may provide new perspectives or information that will modify positions our leaders have taken. Sometimes, after receiving criticism, a member in a leadership position will still disagree with it. Though he may hold his ground, he accepts the criticism gracefully. If those in leadership positions are unable to accept criticism, our fellowship has fewer options for growth and development at its disposal.

There will always be those who offer harsh criticism that may seem to be less than constructive. But the Ninth Concept requires that our leaders hear these voices well. Some truth may be contained even in personal attacks, and a good leader must be able to look for the truth and discard the rest.

Effective leadership will always be highly prized within our fellowship. Our service structure can only be as good as the individuals who serve in it. Therefore, we must constantly elect good leaders, men and women of integrity, to N.A. service positions at every level.

7. Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation.

This concept gives our trusted servants the discretion and latitude they need in order to act effectively. The Seventh Concept gives them the freedom to decide, within the framework of their responsibilities, how best to respond to problems and situations as they arise.

This concept is closely related to Concepts Three and Four. Concept Three calls for the delegation of authority in a measure that matches the delegation of responsibility, and Concept Four notes that the final point of delegated authority should be singular. The Seventh Concept places the responsibility on each service entity to determine whether or not a specific decision or action falls within one's own sphere of authority as established under those two concepts. Such judgment calls required while performing N.A. services then become matters of conscience rather than matters of enforcement. The recognition of this ability is grounded in the assumption that the principles of our program, as applied in the lives of trusted servants, build into our service units a basic integrity that can be trusted.

The Seventh Concept works most effectively when those responsible for our services make regular reports of all significant actions they take. This, along with an active commitment to consult with others before making important decisions, serves as a safeguard against possible abuse of this ability. As a spiritual fellowship, we look with love and understanding on inevitable human error--including errors in

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judgment. No one can be expected to exercise this ability perfectly. But through practice--sometimes trial and error--each service body and each trusted servant will work out an understanding of how to most properly apply this ability.

8. All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services.

The Eighth Concept seeks to insure that our service structure will always be designed to include active, experienced trusted servants in the decision-making process. There are many roles at the various levels of N.A. service. There are elected representatives, committee and subcommittee officers, board members, group officers, and volunteers of various kinds. At each level it is important to identify the roles that entail "substantial responsibility for our services," and to include those people in the decision-making process at that level. Each board or committee at each level of service will necessarily make its own decisions concerning the application of this concept.

N.A. service is a team effort. The voice of each member of the team is of great value as we seek to express the collective conscience of the whole. We ought never allow a base of valuable experience to be created, and then leave that resource to lay fallow. Area administrative officers and subcommittee chairs, for example, bear substantial responsibility for the fulfillment of area-level services. Their ongoing growth and experience in carrying out their duties is an invaluable resource to the area. The area committee as a whole recognizes them as full participants, putting valuable experience to best use.

Our service boards and committees represent the best cross-section of N.A. perspective and experience. Each participant's contribution to the discussion is important. Clearly, GSRs should participate fully in area committee discussions. The general officers and subcommittee chairs on that area committee bring a different experience base, and therefore a different perspective to the team. It's the conscience, the perspective, and the voice of all of these servants together that make for the strongest decision-making process available to us at each level.

Again, a key idea throughout these concepts is *delegation*. We call our region's representative to the national service conference a *delegate*, whom we expect to participate fully in the conference. Freely expressed individual conscience is the essential element in group conscience on any level. Our service representatives are responsible to the fellowship as a whole, rather than to any specific constituency; so are all the other trusted servants on the team. The delegates are the regions' offerings to the spiritual mix that makes up the group conscience of the national service conference, and the rest of the trusted servants with responsibilities on that level make up the balance of that same mix.

There is no firm rule about how to best apply the principle of participation to every situation. In an atmosphere of love, mutual respect, and frank, open discussion, each service body decides these things for itself. N.A.'s principle of spiritual anonymity is the foundation for the kinds of decisions a service body must make with regard to the Eighth Concept. This principle points our fellowship toward a leveling of the individual's relative importance as a participant in N.A. service. The Eighth Concept, with its emphasis on equalizing the relative weight of each voice on the team, puts the spiritual principle of anonymity into practice. Though we don't *all* participate in *every* decision, we all have the right to participate in the decision-making process in proportion to the level of responsibility we bear.

9. Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.

This concept acknowledges that all sides of an issue ought to be carefully considered by a service body before decisions are made. Voices of dissent against majority opinion perform a valuable service by forcing thorough debate on important issues. Well-heard dissent protects us from the dictates of a misinformed or hasty majority. In the best interests of the fellowship, any member of the service structure should be encouraged to enter debate or issue minority reports on matters at hand. The body should always take the time to hear them well before making final decisions.

Members may at times feel that decisions made by those with delegated authority have the potential to be harmful to the fellowship, or are not consistent with the spirit of our steps, traditions, or concepts for service. Voicing dissent at such times is not simply the right of those members, it is their responsibility.

One way such responsibility is exercised is in the presentation of reports. When a decision is reached, those who spoke against that decision can prepare a report outlining the reasons for their objections. The chairperson of the committee, conference, or board in which the decision was made may specifically request such a report, or the dissenting parties may choose on their own to prepare it. In any case, those responsible for implementing the decision then have the responsibility to carefully consider the points raised in the dissent.

In some cases the decision may even be overturned; in others, it may stand. Our decision-making process is not perfect. This concept encourages us to continue to consult group conscience when the wisdom of a decision is questioned. On the other hand, once thorough debate has been held, and a decision still stands, the time comes for all to accept and cooperate with the final decision.

The expression of the individual conscience to the group is the foundation of group conscience. Without it, we block out the guidance of a loving God who is our ultimate authority. The majority whose position is being challenged should always treat such input with great respect and careful consideration. This concept,

cherished by the majority and minority alike, is vital to the delicate overall balance of our concepts for service.

10. Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make petition for the redress of a personal grievance.

The Tenth Concept provides an important safeguard in the overall design of our services. Petitions for the redress of personal grievances may be made when any trusted servant feels he or she has been treated unfairly. This concept builds into our structure a sense of respect for the individual.

The Tenth Concept is designed especially to protect those who exercise the Ninth Concept. Together, the Ninth and Tenth Concepts support an atmosphere in which all participants in a service board or committee feel free to express themselves frankly on the matters at hand. This open atmosphere is essential for the exchange of widely varying viewpoints necessary in effectively developing a collective conscience. If, after having demonstrated the courage of their convictions, individuals become the subject of reprisals initiated by those who disagree with them, the Tenth Concept allows them to petition the appropriate service body for redress of their grievance. Thus, the respect of our service structure for the rights of the individual N.A. member are guaranteed. In a fellowship such as ours, whose success is based upon mutual support and cooperation, that kind of respect for the individual is irreplaceable.

This concept is applied in various ways, depending upon the particular kind of service body in which the issue arises. An area or regional committee might consider such a matter during its sharing session. The board of directors of one of our service centers, on the other hand, may have more formal grievance procedures written into its employment policy to accommodate this concept. However it is applied in a given situation, the right to petition for the redress of a personal grievance should be accessible to all members of the N.A. service team at all levels of our service structure.

At the same time, members should not exercise this right hastily. We consult with others, check our motives, and ask ourselves honestly, were we actually wronged by an inappropriate action? If we have open, frank discussion, and sound application of our recovery principles in our services, this right will seldom need to be exercised. It is included here as an assurance of our respect for each individual member.

11. At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate.

The Narcotics Anonymous program is a spiritual one. One way of understanding that is to say that it is a "non-material" program. The essential act that defines N.A. is one addict freely helping another apply the principles of recovery, asking nothing in return. No payment is ever made for this service. No fee is ever charged. This

487 keeps the spiritual essence of what we do primary, and keeps troublesome
488 diversions from that spiritual essence at a minimum.

489 N.A. groups, as the primary vehicles for carrying this message, function best when
490 they are not diverted by conflict over money. Only through experience will a group
491 learn how much money is truly needed to keep the group's work going, and how
492 much causes controversy. Groups that do not take on the distraction of managing
493 large sums of money can give their full attention to freely giving away the spiritual
494 message of N.A.

495 Does this mean that groups should not pass a basket at every meeting, or that
496 members should feel that there is no need to place money in the hat at meetings?
497 No, it doesn't. N.A.'s principle of self-support holds that we accept no money from
498 outside sources, so our own willingness to provide the money for N.A. services is
499 essential to our primary purpose. If the area, for example, is to provide adequate
500 public information, phoneline service, literature for institutionalized addicts, and all
501 the other services it is responsible for, money is required.

502 This concept acknowledges that money is needed to effectively carry the N.A.
503 message. For the group, it is a statement that its expenses should be paid, that a
504 small sum should be kept to cover unforeseen expenses that may arise, and that the
505 remainder should be passed along to the rest of the service structure.

506 At all levels of N.A. service, the same principle applies. The size of the budgets
507 may vary greatly at different levels of service, but at no level should there be an
508 excessive hoarding of funds. If we've delegated a particular responsibility to
509 someone else, it becomes our responsibility to provide them with the means to carry
510 it out. It is always unacceptable to have a large sum of money sitting idle, begging to
511 become the subject of squabbling over what to do with it.

512 Money in Narcotics Anonymous is always used to further our primary purpose.
513 The group uses it to buy literature and pay expenses related to renting the meeting
514 room and purchasing supplies. At other levels it is in various ways turned into
515 services. All of this is done in support of N.A.'s spiritual aim--to carry the message
516 to the addict who still suffers.

517 It is not likely that we will ever see in N.A. an accumulation of money that is
518 greater than the need for our services. That is our best safeguard that this concept
519 will be upheld by our fellowship as a whole. It is entirely possible, on the other
520 hand, that a given service committee might wish to engage in fundraising efforts to
521 accumulate large sums, hoarding the money in an excessive reserve fund or making
522 poor decisions about spending priorities.

523 In order for our service efforts to be effective, our service boards and committees
524 must handle money responsibly.¹ Committees should have clearly established
525 priorities, and should measure each expenditure against that priority list. There is

1. Footnote for U.S. edition only: For more information, see the Group Treasurer's Handbook, available from the Fellowship Service Office.

often more on the priority list than our budgets will allow. Until the fellowship grows and is able to provide more money, only the highest priorities can be funded. This is a familiar picture to most committees, and one that points clearly to the importance of properly applying this concept.

In setting priorities, a committee may be tempted to look at its own needs only, holding on tightly to its own funds and spending money on its own projects, neglecting its role in providing needed funds to the next level of service. That kind of thinking is contrary to the Eleventh Concept. High on the list of priorities should be a commitment to further the goals of N.A. as a whole. Our service boards and committees need money to do this, and they are given that money by the other levels of N.A. service. For N.A. as a whole to deliver the services necessary to keep growing and fulfilling our primary purpose around the world, the flow of funds must not bottleneck at any point in our structure.

Money is needed to provide internal support and guidance to our own committees; to produce, translate and distribute our message in written form; to bring our members together in a worldwide service community committed to the vision of spreading our message to those in need--particularly as we spread into more and more countries and across more and more cultures. It is needed to inform the public about N.A. and to reach addicts who can't get to meetings. These needs will always challenge our ability to meet them. That's why it's important that we do not, at any level of service, interrupt the flow of funds needed to accomplish these important goals. We set budgets that are appropriate to the size and nature of the tasks at our level of service, we establish a modest reserve so that those services are not interrupted if unforeseen financial problems arise, and we pass some along to other levels of service. If we do this within a framework of budgeting priorities that holds our primary purpose always foremost in mind, the spirit of this concept of service is well served.

12. Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other.

Taken as a body, the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service go to great lengths to spell out guidelines for effective delegation of authority. At first glance, such authority in the N.A. service structure may seem more like government than service. This concluding concept serves as a reminder that this may never be so.

But we have been using the word "authority" throughout these concepts. Doesn't the use of that word imply a degree of government? No. In Concept Three, we briefly described the sense in which we are using the word here. "By authority," we stated, "we mean permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the service tasks for which one is responsible. Authority of this kind originates at the

group level, and is granted by the groups to the other levels." Government would be the other way around.

The area committee has the authority to develop and implement an approach to H&I, for example, without asking every member of every group in the area for his input on just exactly how to do that. The groups have sent their GSR to provide that kind of input. The GSR has the authority to participate in those discussions on behalf of the group, and helps shape that H&I approach without having to ask each individual member of his group what to do. The area committee has been given "permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the service tasks for which [it] is responsible," tasks which in this case will introduce addicts to the recovery message through the presentation of H&I panels. That's *service*--service provided to the addict who still suffers, service that supports the groups' primary purpose. On the other hand, if the area committee claimed authority to tell the groups how to conduct group meetings, the area would then be attempting to *govern*.

The kind of authority that's delegated to our boards and committees is the authority to serve, not to govern. The service structure does not have the authority to mete out punishments. When individual trusted servants appear to have acted incorrectly in some way, actions of a punitive nature must not be taken by any of our service boards or committees. Even if, after careful study, it seems clear that an impropriety has occurred, the service board or committee affected should not respond with punishment. The committee might offer the opportunity to make amends, and seek assurances that the problem won't come up again. It might even choose to remove the trusted servant from office, should that be necessary for the protection of the fellowship. But a board or committee which offered punishment as a response to impropriety would not be serving the highest ideals of our spiritual fellowship. Our boards and committees are created to serve, not to govern.

The service structure doesn't rule the groups; the national service conference doesn't run the regions. Those things are clearly implied in this concept of service. But there's another side to the Twelfth Concept. "No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other." Groups delegate responsibility to their area committee to administer certain services. The groups grant the committee the authority necessary for it to fulfill those services. The groups cannot get their full measure of service if they constantly "pull rank" on the committee, giving it explicit instructions on every detail of its work. The same principle applies in all matters of delegation at all levels of service; even *ultimate* authority and responsibility must be tempered--"qualified," if you will--by trust and common sense.

No element of the service structure has the authority to govern another; all, rather, serve together as a team, striving toward a common goal, "that no addict seeking recovery need die without having the chance to find a new way of life." It is our

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606 sometimes hard-won experience that quality recovery and service can only be
607 accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect, mutual support, and mutual trust.

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