

# WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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**DATE:** September 1, 1989

**TO:** BOT  
BOD  
JAC  
RSR's and Alternates

**FROM:** Danette C., Chairperson  
BOT Literature Review Subcommittee/Traditions Ad Hoc

The Traditions Ad Hoc group met the weekend of Aug. 18-20 for the first time. This group is composed of the BOT Lit. Review Committee (Danette Creel, Jack Bernstein and Donna Markus) and additional non-trustee appointees - John Farrell, Steve Bice, Sally Evans, Bob McKendrick, Mitchell Soodak, Craig Perman-Weisman, Biff Kramer and Rosalie Rosa. The first nine people are the core members, (those we hope to have attend every meeting) with the remaining being possible replacements as may become necessary.

We hope that all interested members will read these reports and comment on them. All comments, positive and negative, will be very important as we proceed. Receiving no feedback can place a committee in the awkward position of proceeding on the basis of assumptions. SO, PLEASE LET US KNOW. Even a quick call or postcard would be preferable to receiving no feedback.

Our first meeting focused on:

I. Communication with the Fellowship: Reports similar to this one will be developed after each meeting. The reports will be drafted as quickly as possible after each meeting, reviewed by the involved trusted servants, then finalized. The report will first be mailed to all Conference participants (JAC, BOT, BOD, RSR's and RSR alternates), then printed in the next Newline. It will take a minimum of three weeks for the reports to be mailed to each of you.

II. General Plan: We agreed to focus our energies on planning for the project, and not to begin implementation until after several more meetings.

Discussions were held on the number and length of chapters, style, tone, voice, audience, and readability level. One of our core members generated a variety of questions regarding these topics which helped keep us focused on the issues which need to be determined prior to drafting any material. We are looking forward to having that member available during our next meeting to help us with these discussions. It was also suggested that we review some of the Steps input on tone and style to help with this, as well as to aid in maintaining some consistency between the two documents (more on that topic follows later). It was felt that some of the past attempts by our fellowship in the development (and attempts to gain approval) of large literature projects have been hampered by insufficient planning. We found it quite difficult at first to keep discussion focused on the types of details mentioned above. We realized that many of us think about developing literature only from the perspective of actual writing. We hope that by using our time and efforts in the planning and organizing of this project we will be better able to develop the actual draft material.

III. Cooperation/Collaboration with the Steps Ad Hoc Committee. There was much discussion on whether or not the Steps and Traditions would ultimately be one or two books. An agreement was reached to 1) keep in close communication with Steps Ad Hoc Committee, sharing our decisions along the way and 2) to proceed with the Traditions as one project without assuming it would be connected to the Steps. Depending on the Fellowship's final determination, the Traditions project could stand on its own if need be, or could easily be combined with the Steps project while remaining stylistically consistent.

Some thoughts on this approach were: 1) the fellowship is familiar with thinking about these two projects as one book ie., *It Works; How and Why*, 2) it might help us refrain from getting too longwinded and assist in keeping the size down, 3) being separate books could unintentionally relegate the Traditions to service material status, 4) could encourage using either the Steps or Traditions without considering the other.

IV. Purpose of a book on the Traditions: One statement was that it is "to facilitate an understanding and application of the Traditions for groups and individuals". That brought up discussion about groups, individuals and service committees in relation to the Traditions (see below). Some thoughts about purpose and general theme were that this book would serve the fellowship best by providing thought provoking guidance, not directions or instruction. There is a "special something" that happens when we come together in a meeting -- this is what we would like to infuse the writing with. Can it be done? A tradition will remain the same, but our experience

and perception of it may always differ. We do find commonalities of experience at different times and in different circumstances.

We discussed the use of a question and answer format, intermingled with examples and narrative. There was definite agreement within the committee that this book could not be THE ANSWER to everyone's questions. Nor would we want it to be written in such a manner that would promote using it as THE LAW to make a point or prove people right or wrong. We were unable to see how a book can be written to give the definitive answers to all questions on the Traditions.

V. Some more general discussion topics:

- A. Clarification of "input". We have received some phone calls and letters indicating confusion between directions regarding input by the WLC in 88 and 89 and what the Trustees requested this year. That confusion seems to have arisen, in part, because of a difference of interpretation. Literature committees seem most comfortable with providing input on a line-by-line basis or general comments relating directly to a draft, which is what the WLC requests assumed. The Board of Trustees, on the other hand, requested input concerning the general direction of the project AND, more importantly, about the Fellowship's experiences with the Traditions. Since the "Traditions Input" book is NOT a proposed draft, line-by-line input will be of little or no value at this point. For this reason, the latest Fellowship report asks for "short essays" on experiences and also pertinent questions.

We certainly don't mean to stop anyone from reviewing or inputting in whichever manner is most important or positive for them. We also don't want to encourage committees to continue working on a form of input which may not be useful. There was some consensus within our committee that, in all the input we've gathered on the Traditions in the last several years, there's a good chance that no one's going to come up with anything particularly new as far as concepts or principles. Now it will be a matter of determining what should go into the book and in what manner. Some input from regional literature committees has been enclosed as an example of what we feel will be most helpful to us in making this determination.

- B. Deadlines: Since there seems to be some confusion about this input request, we would also like to extend the deadline for input to January 31, 1990.
- C. Differences: The Steps and Traditions will, by nature, result in different types of documents. We will continue to consider the various problems that the Steps drafts have had and the Fellowship's responses to them as a guide for us in developing the Traditions. And we will attempt some presentations in this material which may work well with the Traditions but which did not do well with the Steps. One example is in the use of personal experiences. Personal or group experiences with the Steps varied much more than with the Traditions. As a result, we may be able to make broader use of such experiences.

VI. Working with the WLC Steps Ad Hoc: We met with the members of this committee on Saturday morning and shared information with them about the plans we had discussed so far. We were asked to meet with them again in the future to continue discussing items such as tone, style and format of the two projects. That next get together is planned for October.

VII. Pre-Draft Work: We listed the following as items which need to be done prior to actually working on any draft development. You will note that decisions were made on a few of these items already.

- A. Make use of a technical advisor on exactly how to write a book, i.e., the details of tone, style, voice, etc. as mentioned above. One of our core group members, who happens to be quite scholarly about this particular subject, will be asked to present the information we need about making these kinds of decisions at our next meeting. If he is unable to do so (if we've made too big an assumption!), we will have someone else present to do the same.
- B. Continue and Finalize discussions on:
  - 1. The format, tone, style, voice, audience, use of glossary, topical index, type of introduction, and readability levels. We will obtain examples of material which is written at different reading levels for examination at the next meeting. We did seem to agree that the length of each chapter would be determined as we progressed further into developing the first couple of chapters. We also agreed that there didn't seem to be any reason to change the assumed format of arranging the book by one chapter per tradition. Also under

discussion is the development of an introduction to help in setting the tone and style for the entire project.

2. In discussions of audience, there was definite committee agreement that this book will be written for members of Narcotics Anonymous. It will not be intentionally geared to interested outsiders, newcomers, or oldtimers. We decided that we felt most comfortable with an approach which is suitable for all N.A. members.
  3. Will the book focus only on group level application of the Twelve Traditions? Discussion proceeded about how the traditions encompass a mixture of spiritual and pragmatic principles. Applying these principles in all areas of one's life comes from working the Steps, and will be mentioned or inferred. Specific focus and elaboration in the text will be geared to N.A. groups.
  4. Will this book be tailored for use in Traditions Study meetings? We thought not, but that we might think about making convenient "breaks" in long chapters. We definitely want it to contain material which will be useful in a Traditions Study Meeting. Chapter length will undoubtedly be determined by content in each case.
  5. To what extent will we need to consider the use of slang terms and North American terminology as it may relate to translation considerations?
- C. Decide on the writing process: We agree that one issue which hampered past efforts has to do with the actual process used in developing drafts. The Fellowship has over the years, been exposed to a variety of writing processes, all of which I believe have been valuable and necessary experiences. The problems occur when there is insufficient or inaccurate reporting of the process. We shall endeavor in our work to relieve that problem through these types of reports. Our group plans on reviewing all input and then deciding how best we feel we can prepare good drafts for Fellowship review. We so far, lean in the direction of combining our own writing with the Fellowship input writing, then giving it all to our special workers to put into a cohesive, flowing draft. We are not committed to this to such an extent, however, that we cannot change as we continue to discuss our options. We believe that part of the lesson we've learned in the

last few years and the last few literature projects is that any group producing a document (in this case the Trustee Tradition Ad hoc core group) must give sufficient clear direction to volunteer members, staff, writers, editors, (WHOMEVER we ask to perform specific duties for us) about what exactly we want accomplished. Also that the core group be clear about the relationship between itself and anyone else asked to perform specific tasks - that the group retains literary control throughout the development of the piece. We are committed to doing whatever we all feel will result in the best material possible. We spent at least three hours discussing, not only the possibilities, but our understanding of what the Fellowship has communicated about its feelings and desires in the matter.

We spent some additional time considering our own and other's interpretations of the terms writer, (creative vs. technical writer), editor, etc. Some questions we need to deal with include, What happens when one of our service centers hires a special worker who is a member of N.A.? Are they hired for their recovery or for their professional skills? What happens when a service committee wants to use a special worker for a specific skill, i.e. writing? These questions point to the need to discuss what "professionalism" is in Narcotics Anonymous, and will be discussed more in future meetings.

- D. Examine the review and approval process - The motion passed by WSC '89 giving the Traditions project to the Trustees mandated use of the WLC guidelines section in the review and approval procedures. So far, our discussions have resulted in a feeling that, for this project at least, we would like to see a wider distribution. The section of the WLC guidelines referred to in the motion states that review form materials are sold ONLY to area and regional literature committees and groups where no ASC exists. We would like to have the Traditions review material sold to anyone who desires it. We will, most likely, recommend that the Board of Trustees present an amendment to the Conference '90 requesting that, for this specific project, wider distribution can take place when drafts are ready.

We did mention the possibility of some type of review workshops and will consider this more as time goes on. One thing we seemed to feel fairly certain about was the distribution of review drafts "piecemeal", meaning that Tradition One would go out for review when it was ready without waiting for the remaining chapters.

We felt this would alleviate the problem of the Fellowship getting huge documents to review at one time and would also allow us to get feedback as we went along rather than completing an entire project only to find that the Fellowship didn't like the style or tone or whatever.

#### VIII. The Drafts -

- A. We do not perceive beginning actual work until after the first of the year. We will probably meet once a month through November, not meet in December, then come together again in January to regroup and begin the process of developing either a detailed outline or draft. We discussed the option of developing the Introduction first and using that as a type of "thesis statement" or foundation - our internal outline for the rest of the work. It could lend guidance throughout our work and could also be changed/expanded as we proceed. We talked at length about exactly how the committee members would review and utilize the input. We agreed to begin by getting all the input currently available on the Introduction and Tradition One, reviewing it individually before our Sept. meeting, then sharing more about how best we feel we can use it in the drafts. We also discussed having special workers go through it all, either at the same time, before or after our review, and sort the material according to outline headings.
- B. The WSC-89 motion which assigns this project to the Board of Trustees specifies a date of October 1990 for the production of a review form draft. The feasibility of meeting this deadline was discussed at length, with agreement to continue the discussion next time. The committee members recognized that if it seems appropriate to ask the conference to change the date, the Board of Trustees will make that decision. Any motions to WSC would come from the Board of Trustees and not from the Ad Hoc committee.

#### IX. Plans for next meeting on Sept. 22-24 tentative agenda:

- A. Continue discussion about audience, readability level, tone, style, voice, etc. We also hope to have samples of what various readability levels are before the next meeting.
- B. Continue discussion on the layout, focus, and purpose of the book.

- C. Discuss our review of the input on Tradition One and the Introduction and continue planning the best way to collate/compile/use the input.
- D. More discussion on the review, input, and approval processes which may best serve the fellowship in this project.
- E. The meeting will begin Friday evening and end Sunday about noon.

Attachments: Sample input

## Tradition One Input

### 1) Common Welfare

A) Freedom from the disease of addiction

B) Group commitment to member

1. atmosphere of recovery
2. preserving meeting for recovery
3. carrying message to addict

C) Member commitment to group

1. Best for group not individual
2. spiritual center of every group
3. Traditions guard group welfare

### 2) Unity

A) Personal Recovery

1. Spiritual solutions through 12 steps
2. letting go of self centered ideas
3. letting a loving god into our lives
4. I can't we can

B) N.A. Unity

1. Foundation for traditions
2. Group level unity, benefits for group
3. disagree without being disagreeable
4. surrender to group conscience

C) Unity in action

1. Working together
2. Commitment to service and primary purpose
3. Setting new goals and letting go of resistance to change

## Questions

- 1) What is spiritual center of every group.
- 2) How does service affect both individual and the group.
- 3) How does anonymity serve as foundation of all our traditions.
- 4) How do 12 steps tie into the traditions? Explain the equal importance
- 5) How do we protect our group from taking on a 3 ring circus atmosphere or focus on social or fundraising events?
- 6) What are the consequences of people slandering other fellowships during the meeting
- 7) How does concept of disease and the N.A. message promote Unity
- 8) Explain consequences of identifying with more than one disease.
- 9) We have some members who are recovering addicts and also work in the treatment field. What can we do when they practice group therapy on a group level.

## Tradition Two

The committee felt very comfortable with the outline provided in the input material. We would like those subject expanded upon.

### Questions

- 1) Explain that group conscience is not a vote, and how a loving god enters as explained in the "principles of service"
- 2) How can a group stop "invasion" of non home group members who wish to sway a conscience
- 3) Explain why and who a trusted servant is accountable to.
- 4) Explain benefits of communication between fellowship and other trusted servants
- 5) Touch on the importance of commitment and responsibility of trusted servants.
- 6) What is a Home group? How is it beneficial to the service structure
- 7) Explain consequences to newcomers and the member with time in regards to the "guru" attitude in service.
- 8) How can we encourage newcomers to share their opinion and still be an individual member. (The example is the impact that a sponsor or friend may have on his opinion)