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Hev. guys, give this a lot of attention this month. Not only were there topics discussea that are difficult to get on paper, I had two papers due in school the week after this meeting. So, this did not receive the same kind of attention that it got last time.

TO: BOT, BOD, JAC, RSR's, RSR Alternates, RLC's

FROM: Danette Creel, Chairperson, BOT Literature
          Review Subcommittee/Traditions Ad Hoc

The Traditions Ad Hoc group met over the weekend of Sept. 22-24 and began Friday night with the first agenda items.

I.   Audience:
       The book will not be written with a non-Fellowship audience in mind, i.e. professionals, treatment centers, etc. Although many non-members are interested in Narcotics Anonymous and our relationship with them requires application of our Traditions, we feel it is our members' responsibility to use the book to learn about the Traditions and educate non-members.

       It will not be specifically geared to new or old members. Since input and writing will come from some members with many years clean time, there may be experiences in the book which some won't relate to because they won't yet have had similar experiences. We have seen, in previous literature projects, a tendency to reject experiences that some members have not yet had. We hope this book will be something that members will grow with.

       Regarding non-English speaking members - every attempt will be made to be sensitive to the needs of non-English speaking membership. However we know we won't be able to accommodate all language needs. Some words, phrases, even styles of presentation can't be accurately translated. We must, as a Fellowship, expand our understanding of that reality. Non- English speaking N.A. communities need to be able to adapt our N.A. approved literature as best they can; the rest of us need to trust. The most important issue is simply that the message and philosophy be maintained in any translation process. As far as involving every member equally in the input/development process, we would hope that the non-English speaking community would participate as fully as anyone else as reports do go to all RSR's.

       Will the book be oriented to service committees, groups, be a guide for the BOT!? Directing it to groups would definitely make it easier to envision the audience and allow a broader application. There needs to be material which members can grow into - thought provoking - useful as a study guide - have a broad group appeal - not have legalistic-type answers - not attempt to resolve service

structure questions/concerns. A process occurs in working the Steps which allows us to see that the Traditions are not laws - do not require legal interpretations or enforcement. In the past, questions to BOT have been seeking "Superior Court" type rulings, most frequently when a member has felt someone else was wrong. **NOTE: This discussion was later taken up again and resolved in our Statement of Purpose.**

II.   Readability Levels:
We were able to go into better discussions about the details mentioned in John's first memo (August 1989), one of which was readability levels. John came with a second memo for this (September) meeting which included the following information:

1.   Readability means that something is understandable because of a clear style of writing which allows the reader to concentrate on the message.
2.   Readability formulas were developed to help writers determine whether or not what they wrote was comprehensible to their audience.
3.   There are more than 200 of these mathematical formulas many of which are available on computer software. They are computed by counting the average number of words per sentence, syllables per one hundred words, number of words with more than three syllables ("hard words")etc., etc. The result is expressed as the number of school years required to read and comprehend the material, however something evaluated as a 14th grade readability level does not necessarily mean that a person has to have been to college to read or understand it.
4.   Their value is in creating a framework (based on the audience level) within which writers work. The writer seeks to write at that level or below, not above. Readability formulas can work as a cautionary guide, helping to monitor the writing and keep it focused on meeting the needs of readers.
5.   We could use this as a way of determining the reading level of our audience by testing the Basic Text. Most members do not complain that the Basic Text is too difficult or too easy to read. We aren't saying everyone likes everything about the style, flow, etc. of the Basic Text, or that everyone may or may not want another book similar to the Basic Text. Only that the readability level seems to suit most of us and that's a good place to start. We ARE NOT going to attempt to duplicate the Basic Text style.
6.   After getting a readability level, a set of criteria is established, goals that we would want to set as standards for the document. This is the important part of the program. **NOTE: The specific goals and style sheet are discussed later.**
7.   A readability formula is simply used to evaluate a draft. Then, the analysis must be interpreted and decisions are made about revision.
The group decided, Yes, we want to utilize this tool on this project. It will ensure consistency throughout chapters AND standardize the writings of individual members.

We also decided that more research was required to determine the best software for our needs. John can do that for us.

III. Voice and Person

Voice is described as the manner in which sentences are constructed. The ones to consider are Imperative or Indicative and Active or Passive. We feel that Indicative and Active are most desirable for our project. Passive voice will be used sometimes but must be a conscious choice. An example of the difference is: active - The committee wrote the book. passive - The book was written by the committee. The emphasis switches between the object receiving the action and the doer of the action.

In order to make conscious choices about the passive voice and not simply slip into it unintentionally, computer software can be used in the editing process to point out each use of the passive voice, so that its effectiveness can be evaluated.

Person is either First, Second or Third: I, you, he/she/it (singular): we, you, they/them (plural). We learned that most non fiction prose, which is what we're doing, is written in 3rd person singular or plural. Most narrative writing is done in 1st person singular. For our purpose it was suggested that a combination of 1st person plural (we) and 3rd person singular(he/she/it) would serve best. Further that the use of "we" be sparing, so the book would not come across as consistently speaking for the whole of N.A., but would appropriately express and emphasize a sense of community and identification. It was suggested that any reference to God always be in the 3rd person singular, meaning it would always be stated as God, not as Him, Her or It. There was no objection.

IV. Tone

Tone is the manner in which information is presented. The major categories we discussed were Conversational, Formal/Informal, Instructional, Positive/Negative,Invitational, Experiential and Expository (a style of instruction using examples).

We chose positive, informal and invitational. An instructional tone might be used only when writing about an historical aspect of the Traditions.

We want to emphasize the benefits of understanding and applying the Traditions. We laughingly, but seriously, agreed it would be a good idea to limit the use of the word "violate" in any form to once per chapter.

V. Style and Purpose Statement

Style, the form into which information is put, was our next topic. We quickly realized that in order to define the criteria for our stylistic goals, we needed to have a clear idea of the purpose for writing this book. So...... we started in on that, calling out the following list of items that came to our minds;

thought provoking
to invite participation and questions
stimulate discussion

fresh application, i.e. no dated or limiting examples
provide history (historical perspectives of each tradition)
convey spiritual principles - the spirit that is at work when groups are attempting to find answer/solutions
present the reasons why the Traditions are needed
engage members with the Traditions
provide a means to understand the realationship of each member and group to the Traditions
encourage members to find their own answers.

Also, that the format of each chapter might be a) general remarks b) how we got where we are c) questions to allow reader to take it wherever it needs to go. Bob was asked to take all the above and draft a statement that we could work on Saturday.

Before ending for the day, we discussed a request from the New Jersey Regional Literature Committee to expand the mailing list for these reports to include all regional literature committees. Our previous decision about the mailing list was based on three main considerations: 1) utilizing the service structure and encouraging RSR's to get the information to the RSC's, 2) staying out of the WLC network, as it seemed we had already caused enough confusion, and 3) mailing expense. There are roughly forty registered regional literature committees, so the added expense will be minimal. We checked with the WLC Chairperson who does not feel that there will be a problem as far as interfering with their communication process. We still hope that RSR's are trying to distribute information throughout their regions. Regional literature committees can help get it to area literature committees. Beginning with this report, the mailing list will include Regional Literature Committees.

We began Saturday with the draft statement on chalkboard. Bob provided us with a single sentence statement attempting to cover all the above stuff from last night. We tried to work with one sentence for awhile, then decided to let John guide us, using a framework of multi-sentences. We agreed that to communicate most clearly and unambiguously, we would use sentences of ten words or less with a variety of action verbs. Our list of verbs included explore, engage, examine, stimulate, encourage, focus.

During this search we had a discussion about our decisions and their relationship to the Steps book. The ease with which Steps & Traditions could be combined will depend, in part, on our final determination of purpose, as well as style and tone and the use of a computerized style sheet. Will the Step group decide to use the same things we have? Will there be one or two books? We will need to keep in close contact with the Steps Ad-Hoc Committee and make a list of these most important compatibility questions to discuss when we meet together in October.

We also spent quite some time discussing "history", and "historical perspective" of the Traditions. When we discussed this earlier, we mentioned that our history is

not A.A's. Some of us felt that to give a true history required A.A.'s history. We talked back and forth about this for some time before, during and after creating our statement of purpose. For the most part, it seemed that we would like to present information about how the Traditions have been important for N.A. and why they are important, using experiences we have had in the past 36 years. However, we also recognized that if mentioning their history back to A.A. would help it could be done and it is important not to get caught up in AAphobia.

The committee agreed that a purpose statement is crucial and once decided, it directs the course of the entire project. Once the work is underway, the purpose cannot be changed without compromising the whole project. We came to the following statement through a wonderful experience of sharing, discussing, compromise and dedication. There were times when we wanted to stop, put it away till later, but didn't. The final sense of accomplishment was quite dramatic. It will be most interesting to hear of anyone else's reaction.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:
The Traditions section of It Works How and Why **shall serve as a resource for NA groups and the individual member. The book seeks to:**
> **Explore the spiritual principles within the Traditions.**
> **Engage members with the spirit - not the law - of the Traditions.**
> **Examine the history of the N.A. Traditions.**
> **Provide a basis for thought and discussion about the Traditions.**

Before moving right into the next area of discussion, it would be great to convey a sense of the moment. We sat with a special feeling for a while and enjoyed the sense of unity that had been created, which is exactly what we would like to see presented in this book. We all want information that will lead N.A. members to that same feeling of working for the common welfare by applying spiritual principles.

Anyway, we went back to setting stylistic goals. Using John's list (see below) we agreed to the items on it.

1. Keeping sentences short, aiming for an average of twenty-two words or fewer per sentence.
2. Using the simple over the complex - for sentences, for words, for thoughts.
3. Choosing familiar rather than esoteric words.
4. Avoiding unnecessary words.
5. Using action verbs and avoiding the passive voice.
6. Using a conversational rather than a formal tone.
7. Using concrete images that the reader can picture.
8. Avoiding abstract words.
9. Relating to the reader's experience.
10. Varying words, sentence length, and sentence construction to sustain interest.
11. Writing to express ideas, not to impress the reader.

12. Using non-sexist and inclusive language in a grammatical, intentional, and consistent manner.
13. Avoiding redundancy (remembering our previous thought about limiting the use of the word "violate" to once per chapter.)

We asked specific questions about
1. avoiding abstract words - what exactly does that mean and how do you do it? You can see the list of what's already in a computer program to begin with, then add or delete.
2. non -sexist - how best to do that. Probably use of he, she, one, the member, it. Alternate examples between male and female.
3. what about "genericizing examples and anecdotes? not to do it across the board, but only as necessary.

Style includes the readability level along with the stylistic goals. Both have to be translated into a set of criteria for computer software. Specific software which meets the need can then be purchased or created. The creation of criteria is something which will need to be done by a person with professional skills.

VI. Structure and layout
Last month we had agreed to thirteen chapters and that the length would not be predetermined. John presented us with some information this time, however, that convinced us to set some limits for length. One thing I identified with was that if someone doesn't give me a time limit when I'm speaking at a meeting, I could very easily keep talking long after there's anything left to be said. Better to set a limit and be aware that we've exceeded it. Then we can always extend it. There is also the continuing question about whether or not we have to plan for this to be combined with the Steps or not. LET US KNOW IF IT MATTERS TO YOU!!!!
We agreed to figure on a 100 - 130 page book, with 8 - 10 - pages per chapter, equaling between four to six thousand words. We re-agreed not to limit ourselves by attempting to gear it for the sole purpose of Traditions study meetings. If it doesn't fit one chapter per meeting reading requirements, groups can decide how to break it up. One idea was subchapter headings and, again, convenient stopping points.

What about graphics, designs, pictures, cartoons, sidebars with anecdotes or questions? What about questions at all? If we say yes to questions, what about a formal list at the end of each chapter or the end of the book? Or informally, provided as part of the narrative throughout the text? DOES ANYONE HAVE A STRONG FEELING ABOUT IT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER? IF YOU SEND INPUT ABOUT THESE THINGS TRY TO SHARE A BIT OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS ALSO. GIVE US SOME MORE PERSPECTIVE.

Well, we ended, Saturday night, without having gotten to the last couple of items from our tentative agenda. We all felt, however, that even if we had done nothing other than the statement of purpose the meeting would have been well worth it.

Bob and Mitchell had both asked for time on Sunday to bring up a couple of things, which is what we spent the remainder of our time on. Everything else will go to October's agenda.

VII. Relationships/Communication

We started Sunday morning with an inspirational message from Bob about "relationship versus issue". In our case, the relationship of a service committee to the Fellowship and Conference versus the issue (project) it is working on. He made the following points:

1. The relationship is as (if not more) important than the issue.
2. The Committee must keep the communication going even if there is no response.
3. The Committee must educate the Fellowship about the communication responsibility we each have.
4. We must do our best to integrate the Fellowship in the process through our communication.
5. The Committee must keep in mind that it is as responsible to work on the relationship as it is to accomplish the work.

I must try to set the atmosphere here a bit for our readers. Bob has, since the start, been the loudest voice on this topic and this morning's dissertation was a culmination of his attempts to try to get something across which he did not feel we were hearing or listening to quite well enough. We each had our own immediate gut reactions to the style of the messenger and, more importantly, we expressed a common belief, agreement and commitment to the message.

We believe that some past attempts to gain Fellowship approval on various projects may have ended in rejection more because of the quality of the relationship than that of the document or issue.

We asked ourselves what actions can be taken to educate, integrate, etc? One suggestion was attendance at regional events and conventions; be available; be in the mainstream.

What is OUR responsibility in the relationship?
1. To devote a portion of each meeting to discussing what we're doing, individually and collectively. Perhaps even dedicate one entire meeting to the subject.
2. Continue reporting. The mailing list for these reports will be expanded to include all regional literature committees.
3. Consider various types of personal contact.
4. Develop a written plan on how best to maintain the communication. Bob and Mitchell were volunteers for this. Of course, anyone else is welcome to share the work.

Some other thoughts and discussion on this follow:

We aren't the first committee to try this. At least three of us shared that every committee we've been on started out with a similar idea, with a real desire to

establish a relationship with the Fellowship for various reasons. They all believed their method of communicating was in everyone's best interests. Jack shared that many times it seemed the relationship was damaged when a committee made decisions based on a real or, more often, imagined time crunch.

And what about our role individually? How involved do we get in our own areas and regions talking about what we're doing on the committee and/or trying to get people to input? We each found out this meeting how much difference occurs in two people's interpretation of the same word, much less concepts and ideas. To walk out of a meeting like this where almost everything is in a tentative planning stage, then try to give specific answers to a member's concern about something inevitably results in misunderstanding. We often want to have an answer and must accept that we don't need to. It's often much more honest and humble to say "I don't know, we don't know, we've been wondering the same thing"!

Then, how about the Fellowship's part in this relationship? How can Fellowship response be gauged if we get no responses or input? All relationships are two sided (at least). We had to end this discussion for the time being in order to discuss the next issue. We will resume it next month, I'm sure. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL THIS?

VIII.   Committee Member/Professional Overlap

As you may have already picked up, one of our committee members has professional expertise in the how-to's of writing a book as well as in actual writing. This was not the reason he was asked to be a part of the group. Even those of us who have known him for many years did not know the extent of his professional background. He has, so far, contributed that expertise in the committee setting just as any other member would contribute with their particular expertise, assets, etc. However, two items have come up this meeting which will require professional attention, research, development, whatever you want to call it. Those are 1) the study of readability level software and a recommendation for use/purchase of one; and 2) the development of a criteria manual to reflect the stylistic goals we agreed to.

That type of work is what John does. His school/work situation this year is such that he will be contracting out his services to a variety of businesses/periodicals(**I don't really know how best to put this, John, and really don't know about your personal anonymity feelings - please edit accordingly**) . The reason the discussion was begun at this time was that he will need to be deciding on which offers to accept. He would like to be able to spend some of his allotted work time on an N.A. project, but needed some assurance that the group was open to it.

The primary aspects discussed about this included:

1.   Who decides? In our situation, it would probably have to be decided by the full Board of Trustees, not the Ad Hoc committee. Then what about the WSC? Do we have the "right" to make the decision without seeking further Fellowship guidance or Conference approval? If we operate just

within the "Letter of the Law", then Yes, we could. We don't want to. Although we seemed to have a general sense that hiring a professional to do what we can't do ourselves is traditionally correct, we want to explore it slowly. The questions involved are simply too important and multifaceted to make a decision after one hour's discussion.

2.   Who pays? If a committee decides it would like to have a professional person hired to do some specific job does it tell WSO who, when and how? Will it make a recommendation and expect WSO to take it? What is the relationship between the professional needs of a committee and the fiduciary responsibility of the WSO?

3.   What if that professional is also a member serving on the committee? How does that relationship continue? How and when does the person switch roles? Where does the regular member participation with professional background end and the paid professional time begin? Will it work if the paid time is specifically related to only certain projects? What would make this person different than the WSO special worker/coordinator who regularly sits in the committee meeting? Coordinators are paid for the entire time spent in a committee meeting. Would it make any difference if a committee member was paid only for a particular project? The coordinator is, in our group anyway, considered a participant of the group and shares just as the elected or appointed members. However, the coordinator is not responsible to stand behind anything the group may do, which is why, we realized, we don't feel comfortable asking them to vote or be involved in the decision making consensus. So, how does a person in a dual role handle that? Do we believe someone can handle that?

4.   And what about the member who ends up giving more than a fair share because of an abundance of professional knowledge? When do we as a committee, become responsible to pay a member for professional expertise, technical assistance, etc.?

5.   What if it turns out we do want to make a decision to hire a professional for something before WSC? Do we put it out in this report and wait for response? Do we use a poll by mail of Conference participants. (By the way, that has been done in years past.) Do our committee members start making phone calls to their neighboring RSR's and involving the Fellowship that way?

Unfortunately, we didn't have much time for this beginning discussion and John had to leave a bit early to catch his plane. We did state that a) yes, we agreed we needed the two aforementioned projects completed and that they required professional attention b) yes, we would like the convenience of having John (as a familiar, able, and involved member) be that professional c) no, we wouldn't be able to make any decision within a month's time.

We also realized that the criteria manual won't be needed for a while. The research on the readability level will be, however, and John stated that he would be able and willing to continue and complete his work on that without depending on being hired for it.