

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS (PROJECT)-TRADITIONS GROUP

8-89: 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.

8-89: Deadline - We would like to extend the deadline for input to January 31, 1990.

9-89: We agreed to a format of arranging the book by one chapter per tradition, with an introduction.

9-89: 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.

9-89: We definitely want to make use of a technical advisor on exactly how to write a book, i.e., the details of tone, style, voice, etc.

9-89: We feel that Indicative Mood and Active Voice are most desirable for our project. Passive voice will be used sometimes but must be a conscious choice.

9-89: 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 stated as God, not as Him, Her or It. There was no objection.

9-89: We chose positive, informal and invitational tone. An instructional tone might be used only when writing about an historical aspect of the Traditions.

9-89: 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.

9-89: The group decided, Yes, we want to utilize a readability formula on this project. It will ensure consistency throughout chapters AND standardize the writings of individual members.

9-89: Using list below, we agreed to the stylistic 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 (including previous discussion about limiting the use of the word "violate" in any form to once per chapter.)

9-89: 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.

9-89: Two items have come up 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. 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.

10-89: We will select two manuals, one relating to common usage the other to grammar. Another need is a stylistic guide - this contains the words, styles, grammatical points, etc. which are unique to our particular organization.

10-89: There was some feeling of wanting, at least, to be able to report to the WSC 1990 that the mechanism was in place to produce drafts. If possible, also having a draft of the Introduction or maybe even Tradition One. We also wondered how beneficial it might be to have a draft of one chapter for our March meeting with the full BOT.

10-89: Pre review period--an idea was presented for a 60 to 90 day pre-review period in which a letter of guidance would be sent with the material to be reviewed. The letter would ask for very specific input about images, clarity, etc. Provide question/input form. Ask things like, Do you find any overtones of religion, sex or race?, Were the examples real?, Was the tone informal?, Were the words too hard or easy?, Did you find any of the language offensive?

10-89: Tasks needing to be done before beginning writing:

1. Detailed sense of stylistic goals.
2. Firm decision about general content, identify spiritual principles by chapter, historical content, examples. This will help us see where things fit best and avoid repetitiveness
3. Detailed structure and content outlines - one basic structural outline for all chapters except Introduction. The content outline will fit into the structural more specific to each chapter.
4. Decide how the actual writing is going to be done. Decision on writing will affect how quickly we move with the other decisions. The more work (actual writing) the Ad hoc group does, the more slowly the work will proceed.

10-89: There was general agreement on the following points. The more attention and care we give to the above decisions, the more automated and technical the "writing" will become. The more structure we have, the more control we'll have over ANY writing process that may be used.

11-89: We decided to ask that the WSO's current consultant be contacted for a meeting to give more information on the method being considered so far, other possibilities, and finally identifying the tasks required for one particular plan.

11-89: We decided to advise any prospective new committee members that part of their willingness to participate in the group will have to include willingness to be unavailable to be hired for any tasks required for this project.

11-89: In summary, the committee definitely needs a technical advisor, a style guide, detailed outlines, production management advice, and a timeline of tasks. On the other hand, the committee already has information for a style guide, framework for communication with the Fellowship, some ideas on how to produce this book, some computer software, a general format, and a statement of purpose.

1-90:

1. It was generally agreed that a limited and structured pre-review by WSCLC and/or BOT might serve the project well. In this way, the material can receive an initial evaluation by a group of people who haven't been involved in the hands-on production of the drafts.
2. Another point of emphasis was that the committee editing review process and the style guidelines will deal with any necessary line-by-line wording corrections. Therefore, this type of input will not be useful and will specifically NOT be requested in either pre-review or formal review.
3. After much discussion, we agreed that a pre-review period would serve to elicit specific feedback about the direction of the project from a smaller group of people (i.e. WSCLC and/or BOT). It was also agreed that a more formal review period would be better for specific responses in the form of communication from the Fellowship. This review period could be for a limited time period and designed around specific requests. In essence, pre-review and review would ask for the same type of information, but from different groups of people.

4. On the related issue of putting the material out chapter by chapter, we still feel strongly that doing so is practical and desirable. A suggestion was made to consider sending several chapters out for review instead of just one. For now, we will continue to plan chapter by chapter with explicit instructions on the types of responses which will be most helpful.

11-89:

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTANT (from committee discussions):

(sent to David Charleson 12-1-89)

1. This committee needs another opinion on how to proceed with this project. What decisions need to be made and when? The committee wants to find a balance between collaborative writing efforts and assigning specific tasks to members of the committee or to paid workers.
2. What are the most beneficial contractual relationships to consider for this project? Where can we get the most benefit from paid consultation?
3. How to define the scope (job description) of a technical advisor in the following areas -
 - a. group facilitator
 - b. production manager
 - c. compilation and use of "style guide"
 - d. do the above tasks need to be done by separate people? which ones can or should be combined?
4. What about wage scale, performance standards, and periodic review for the consultant(s)?
5. How do we get a styleguide made for us? What should the style guide look like? What will it contain? The group feels that this is the first priority. Is it?
6. How to set guidelines for production -
 - a. "cut & paste"
 - b. actual writing
 - c. the process
 - d. review of product
 - e. how to use existing input? (see sample)
 - f. how to accept new material
 - g. how to define and assign specific tasks to members of the committee
 - h. how to draft material?
7. "Write Word" is available for \$30. It allows us to modify the internal dictionary of the Right Writer program which we do own. Where can we get competent advice about whether or not to use this software, or whether to use any software?

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS (INTERNAL) - TRADITIONS GROUP

8-89: The report from each meeting will first be mailed to all Conference participants (JAC, BOT, BOD, RSR's and RSR alternates), then printed in the next Newslite. The mailing list was later (10-89) amended to include Regional Literature Committees.

8-89: 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.

10-89: We agreed that we would like the Ad hoc members and BOT to have their copies of the final report sent first class or a day before the others, to assure early receipt.

10-89: Regarding meeting with BOT - a date of March 9-11 was set during the previous weekend's BOT meeting.

10-89: We decided we would like to 1) add Rosalie from the pool for additional female participation 2) add names to our pool 3) have an additional Trustee scheduled to attend each meeting, on a rotating basis.

10-89: In an attempt to invite more response, the group's coordinator will phone each group and pool member and each Trustee after the first draft of every report to ask for input.

10-89: We decided to synopsize the reports for publication in the Newslite instead of publishing the entire report, with an encouragement to any interested member to request copies of the entire report from WSO or their RSR or Regional Literature Committee.

10-89: It was decided to hold off on hiring an advisor (committee member or not) until some phone calls could be made to poll the BOT on some of the more subtle aspects of this type of decision.

10-89: Timeframe was felt to be important in communication because we'd like to be communicating with the Conference participant who will be responsible for voting when the material comes up for approval. That would mean that a maximum two year period is optimal.

10-89: A suggestion to draft separate communication to RSR's resulted in an assignment (Bob McK) for such a letter to be drafted for further discussion.

11-89: We decided to advise any prospective new committee members that part of their willingness to participate in the group will have to include willingness to be unavailable to be hired for any tasks required for this project.

11-89: We will present the RSR letter in a form that will 1) explain why we're writing (to ask for more direct participation by regions) 2) lay out how we feel that would best be accomplished 3) ask how they see themselves best able to participate. The letter will include the name of the group member assigned to their region as a contact/resource. Regarding phone contact, decided to attempt a couple of calls, leave a message, encourage them calling us, etc., etc.

11-89: We decided, after much discussion, that we would like to ask the Board to re-do the motion, not asking for amendments but simply introducing a brand new motion to serve the current needs of the project. We are asking that we not be bound by the Guidelines at all.

11-89: Decided on the following schedule of meetings. January 12,13,14 will be the next meeting. February 16,17,18 has been set as a tentative date to meet, to be reevaluated in January. March 9,10,11 have been scheduled for a joint meeting with the BOT (whether it begins on the 9th or 10th is still unclear - trustees will be asked about their plans). Another idea of meeting or holding some type of discussions at WSC was tabled for consideration at a later time.

11-89: For the sake of consistency and clarification in our own minds, we came up with the following breakdown of input and some possibilities on how to deal with it.

Types of Input:

- I. Regarding the document
 - A. Line-by-line changes in existing review material have been received.
 1. Grammatical - This may not require review but simply be inputted to a master list of changes.
 2. Conceptual
 - B. Short comments on;
 1. Organizational aspects - These will be utilized in preparing the style guide.
 2. Conceptual - these will be reviewed and sorted according to the outline
 3. General - these will also be reviewed and sorted according to the outline.
 - C. Rewritten material. Some of it is partial or total rewriting of existing drafts. This will be evaluated to identify totally new material and then sorted as above.
- II. Regarding the structure, progress, process, and relationship to the Fellowship. When specific suggestions are received, we will acknowledge them and provide the most recent committee discussion or decisions which are pertinent. All letters of this type are read by the chairperson, then sent to each committee member prior to the next meeting.

1:90:

1. After some discussion, we generally agreed to use the same premise we've been using about decisions. That is to reach consensus and if we can't to simply not make the decision until later or when more input is available.

2. We agreed that any non-committee member who is hired to provide expertise will have to participate in each meeting, so this expense is an important aspect of our decisions.
3. We asked the WSO coordinator to complete the guide and give it to the consultant with a sample document for review and comments.
4. We agreed to begin reviewing input in two person teams. We will work on it through our March meeting, check in at that time for progress reports, and continue on until the WSC, at which time we look forward to more guidance on the writer questions. The consultant developed a checklist and coding system to use in reviewing the input; a checklist to note which elements of each chapter are covered in the input and then a coding by A, B or C to denote desirable, less desirable or unnecessary and duplicated portions.
5. One book is fine. Communications are necessary. We decided to have the chairpeople of each spend more time talking about the specifics of our meetings and share tentative agendas to identify times that may be most helpful to have members participate back and forth. It was agreed to try shared participation; we scheduled such for the next two step meetings and will try to schedule future meetings on same weekends.
6. We agreed that sending reports to RSR's and RSR Alternates helps the committee to utilize and encourage the service structure. The summaries in the *Newsline* also help, and enlarging the mailing list at this time appears to be unnecessary.
7. We discussed the possible misunderstanding of last year's motion based on the difference between what appeared in black and white and what was verbalized in discussion at last year's WSC. We suggested that the next two BOT reports (prior to and during WSC) include information about the developments and understandings since that time.
8. Each member was asked, in addition to the input review, to compile a list of principles to have ready for the combined BOT meeting in March.
9. The scheduled meeting for February was cancelled. Our next meeting is March 9-11 with the Board of Trustees for the purpose of general discussion about the Traditions. A meeting has been scheduled for April 6,7,8 to combine results from the input evaluation teams.

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