

WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



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TO: Conference participants, WSCLC, and regional literature committees
FROM: WSB Traditions Ad Hoc Committee
DATE: February 21, 1992
RE: December, 1991/January, 1992 Traditions Ad Hoc Meetings

We have two meetings to report on this time. The first meeting took place on Friday, December 6, 1991, while the second took place over January 23-24, 1992. Both meetings ended up to be somewhat shorter in duration than originally thought, although all the work we had scheduled was completed. Following our December meeting, the second half of the review and input version of the traditions portion of *It Works: How and Why* was released for fellowship review. At our January meeting, we reviewed the input we received on the first six traditions and made relatively minor changes. Please see the report for specifics.

December 1991 meeting

In attendance were Steve Bice, Danette Banyai, Pete Cole, Mitchell Soodak, Ceven McGuire, and from the WSO, Steve Lantos and Lee Manchester. Danette chaired the meeting, as Bob McKendrick was unable to attend due to illness.

We began by reviewing the agenda. After a cursory look at the input we received on the tradition drafts, we realized that we may well have only one full day's work to accomplish our goals for the weekend. Those goals were to first, review the drafts of Traditions Ten, Eleven, and Twelve, and develop drafts for general review by the fellowship. We had input from two members of WSCLC on these drafts. The second task was to discuss the use of a chapter on the preamble. And finally, to discuss next year's membership and meeting schedule.

Prior to beginning our work to accomplish the above agenda, an hour's discussion ensued around an item in the draft of Tradition Eight regarding meeting places being service centers. At the end of that time, consensus was reached and a revision was made altering that reference.

Discussions on the draft of Tradition Ten resulted in quite a few changes. The primary change focused on the best way to address referencing other Twelve Step fellowships, and their aims and views, without expressing an opinion on that outside issue.

Our review of the Tradition Eleven draft was brief and we made a few minor changes. After the initial read-through of the draft on Tradition Twelve, the group

felt that it was lacking the spirit present in the previous chapters. Discussion on what that spirit is and how to relate it resulted in a new draft being prepared, which the entire group felt was greatly improved and ready for review by the fellowship. In addition to preparing the new draft on Tradition Twelve, the staff writer was able to revise the other chapters as well, so we were able to see and review the final drafts before concluding the meeting.

We then spent some time discussing the introduction, starting with some confusion about whether it should be an introduction, preamble, or foreword. And, depending on that decision, whether or not it needed to go out as part of the review package. The group finally decided to recommend the following: First, that nothing be written specifically about the Preamble, but that it simply appear at the end of the introduction to the traditions portion of the book as a lead-in the Tradition One. Second, that the introduction needs to be drafted by the World Service Board of Trustees. Our recommendation was that the introduction should include how this project began and developed, and some general information, background, and possibly historical perspective about the traditions and their use within the fellowship. Last, and perhaps most important, that the issue of whether or not the traditions apply to the groups only, or to the groups and the service structure, needs a definitive answer and, as such, it must come from the WSB as a whole.

Regarding the topic of membership and meeting schedules, it was agreed that membership does not need to change for the next part of this project, which will be totally devoted to factoring in the input received from the fellowship. Jack Bernstein and Greg Pierce, although both leaving the board at WSC 1992, will be available to continue on this project. We felt that would satisfy the desire to keep an equal portion of board members involved. In addition, we felt that reducing the number of members was a possibility (although not a necessity), particularly since one or more members voiced a willingness to resign as meetings may conflict with other plans.

Looking all the way through approval for the work at WSC 1993, we may only require two more meetings and possibly one or more combined meetings with the WSB. Regarding whether the approval form of our work needs to be released in one or two parts, it was agreed that the board needs to make that decision. We saw pros and cons to both options.

Before ending for the weekend, various members shared their ideas about the best way to prepare for the next meeting, scheduled for January 23-26, at which time we will consider the input received on Traditions One through Six. After that meeting the first approval draft of Traditions One through Six will be mailed to members of the WSB and WSCLC.

January, 1992 meeting

In attendance were Bob McKendrick, Danette Banyai, Kim Johnson, Nancy Schenck and Ceven McGuire, and from the WSO, Lee Manchester and Steve Lantos.

The first item of business was reviewing the meeting's agenda, which included some preliminary administrative discussion about the project in general, followed by the review and consideration of the input received on Traditions One through Six. Once again, it appeared that our work was going to be completed in a shorter period of time than we had previously anticipated. Some members voiced their concern about the amount of time the last two meetings took, wondering whether the work was being rushed or if the process had advanced to such a level where the communication between the committee and the staff team had risen to a degree that a minimal amount of time was needed to get across the group's wishes to the staff.

As a result of these concerns, some discussion ensued about the process utilized in developing this project. It quickly became apparent that the group felt that the process had been refined to the extent that each side of the equation--the committee and the staff team--understood their individual roles well and were able to work extremely effectively to complete their respective tasks. Bob reiterated his desire to communicate with other committees and boards, within world services and the fellowship in general, about this process and perhaps find a way to institute this process in other projects. Some of the pluses of this process includes: enhanced and increased reporting and communicating with the fellowship about the work; advance structural planning that eases the work load at the other end of the project; and, changing the review process from the line-by-line process used previously to a more conceptual, rather than grammatical, review.

Next, we discussed some recommendations we needed to make to the WSB regarding the annual report about this project. We noted the evolution of the processes used during this past year in developing literature; for example, the process used to develop the daily meditation book. The group was hoping that the report would spend some time on the evolving literature development process, including the example mentioned above, the utilization of the staff-team approach, and that, for the first time within years, the fellowship will have the opportunity to approve two book-length pieces in two consecutive years. One of the other points the committee wanted reflected in the annual report was that, because the input from the fellowship on the book thus far called for only relatively minor changes to the review form, a shorter approval period will be asked for, one that will allow for the approval of the book in 1993.

After that discussion, we discussed two pieces submitted to us by the WSCLC for consideration in our work. The first piece, *Unity in Action*, we agreed to keep and felt that the majority of the points it addressed in terms of the traditions, specifically Tradition One, were addressed already in our work. The second piece, *Practicing the Principles of our Traditions*, developed by a local

literature committee, we would return to the WSCLC. Our primary reason was that the focus of the piece seemed to be on the personal application of the principles contained within the traditions, which is not in keeping with what we understand to be the focus of our work. We did, however, feel that the WSCLC may choose to develop an IP along the lines of that work, once the work was returned to their committee. The committee then adjourned for the day.

The following day, the first item was the committee's desire to formally recognize the efforts of the two staff members attached to this committee. As the work is drawing to a close, with the review and input form having been completed during the last meeting, and the committee only having one more meeting tentatively scheduled for August, they felt it appropriate to express their thanks for a job well done. A brief, but emotional, session ensued within which the committee members and staff shared their personal experiences of working with each other on this project. The group then returned to their primary task for this meeting, the review of the input received and the development of an approval draft.

In reviewing the input on Tradition One, the committee decided to add some language describing the value in supporting new or struggling meetings in the section, "Unity in Action." The only other significant change made within this draft was the rewording of the conclusion of this tradition to the next one, as it seemed to indicate that the traditions, like the steps, needed to be worked in order. Similar changes were made for each of the conclusions of the first four chapters. Other than these changes, only minor word or phrase substitutions were made to this chapter.

In the chapter on Tradition Two, some discussion of the input received led to our decision to include some more discussion of the phrase "they do not govern." In reviewing some of the input received, it became apparent that some of the respondents wanted to see more definitive responses in the material. The committee once again reaffirmed their desire to see this work as presenting the principles and allowing for local interpretation, instead of delivering a "guide" book or a set of "laws" about the traditions.

The chapter on Tradition Three was changed only a small amount as well. As with the previous two chapters, the fellowship seemed to generally like the contents and the manner of presentation of the drafts. There were a couple of pieces of input about the defining "the desire to stop using" as meaning drugs. After some discussion, the section dealing with this issue will receive some minor alteration, but the general idea, that NA is for drug addicts looking recovery from active addiction, will stay intact. The section also states that as members gain time within the program, the word addiction takes on a broader meaning for many.

Discussion on the draft of Tradition Four centered around reducing what some members felt was esoteric language. Some of the language within this draft will be simplified to reflect the concepts in more concrete terms. One paragraph

that was deemed to be problematic was removed in its entirety. Other than that, only minor changes were made.

The message the groups are asked to carry was the focus of discussion about the Tradition Five draft. Some input was received asking the group to utilize the definition(s) contained in the basic text. After some discussion about whether or not the desire to use is ever lifted, the committee decided to use the statement referring to a message of hope, recovery from active addiction. Once again, other than this issue, the draft was changed very little.

In discussing the chapter on Tradition Six, few changes were made. The committee discussed whether or not members using the NA logo for personal gain was an issue that should be covered under this tradition. Due to the wording of this tradition, the committee felt that this issue should not be described in the context of this tradition. The group also discussed that problems of money, property, or prestige that would divert us from our primary purpose was covered in the previous chapter, and examples of what may divert groups from carrying the message were given.

After completing this portion of our work, we then discussed what the next steps would be in the progression of this project. The revised drafts will be mailed out to members of the WSCLC and the WSB for their input, and the full board will set time aside during their June meeting to review these drafts and the input received on them. The next time the ad hoc committee will most likely meet is during the weekend of August 14-16 to review and factor in the input received on Traditions Seven through Twelve.

A final reminder to all of you reviewing Traditions Seven through Twelve. Please remember that the deadline for input is July 15, 1992. We would appreciate having your input prior to that date, so we can do our work and release the approval form in time for action at WSC 1993. Once again, we would like to thank the fellowship for their interest in and support of this project.