

The package of material that the Fellowship should review that will be the agenda items of the World Service Conference will be sent shortly. The material contains recommendations for new changes in the structure of N.A. If you desire to see this material, you must obtain it from your areas service representative who will have to obtain it from the regional service representative or the regional service committee. The current N.A. structure specifies that all such review material be submitted to the Fellowship not less than 60 days prior to the start of the conference. Although it was hoped that more time would have been made available for the review process, it was not possible.

* * * * * SPECIAL NOTICE * * * * *

It has recently come to the attention of the Board of Trustees, the Chairman of the World Service Conference and the Chairperson of the World Service Conference Literature Subcommittee and the World Service Office that an unknown person or persons have mailed a pamphlet throughout the Fellowship entitled "Participation". The Board of Trustee Chairperson, the WSC Chairman, the WSC Literature Subcommittee Chairperson and the President of the World Service Office Board of Directors have each asked that a disclaimer be printed in this edition of the NEWSLINE.

The above enumerated trusted servants did not have previous knowledge of this pamphlet and desire that the Fellowship know that the distribution of such a pamphlet constitutes a contravention of the service structure and disregards all of the procedures that have been adopted by the Fellowship regarding the approval of literature. Certainly all of the individuals in the Fellowship that have been active in or knowledgeable of the work in recent years concerning the creation of literature, know that the mailing of a pamphlet without first having been submitted to the World Service Conference Literature Subcommittee is inappropriate and counter productive to the literature approval process.

It is suggested by the trusted servants of each of the service arms noted above that the pamphlet be disregarded and not reproduced. The World Service Conference Literature Subcommittee will add this unknown pamphlet to its current list of items as input. The consideration of this item, as with all other proposed literature will be reviewed according to the procedures previously approved by the Fellowship.

* * * * * REPORT FROM THE TRUSTEES * * * * *

The WSB wishes to thank Bo S. for contributing this month's Article on the Traditions. Bo was elected to the WSB at the World Service Conference meeting in May 1983. He is a former World Literature Sub-committee Chairman and has been active in Service from the beginning of his recovery.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

"TRADITION ONE"

The Twelve Traditions section of the White Booklet and our Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous, contains lines about vigilance and the ties which bind us together. We have been discovering a great deal about these things in the last few years as individuals and as a Fellowship.

We are finding that it is easier to avoid a Traditions violation than it is to do anything much about it once such a violation has occurred. The reason for this lies in the spiritual nature of our program. The Traditions aren't laws with jail sentences or legal penalties for violations. They are every bit as spiritual as our Steps. What happens when we violate the

principles in one of our Twelve Steps? We hurt! And so do those around us. Following the principles in our Traditions is a way to stop hurting. Being a part of our local Fellowship and N.A. as a whole, something we say before we address an N.A. meeting, gives us a sense of identity and security we have usually done without for a long time when we get here. As we grow in recovery, live our Steps and increasingly function as a part of the N.A. Fellowship, our unity gives us peace.

The Twelve Traditions could well be called the Twelve Essentials because it would be impossible to imagine N.A. without them. We would quickly become involved in issues which have nothing to do with recovery and in place of our primary purpose being help to the suffering addict, we would have a bureaucratic nightmare. The reason this will never happen is that you can't have the controls on a spirited Fellowship of recovering addicts required to truly violate them. While the parts may suffer, the whole will survive and live to better days. To violate a Tradition is to take a Step away from N.A. and for any of our members, pain and misery follow quickly. The only thing we can do is to turn around and come back. There will always be those who understand and want to help. We have to stay in touch with the whole.

We're all in this together and each of us is as important as the rest. We need to remember that we are involved with the process of learning to live without drugs. Our difficulties are compounded when we get side tracked on issues which make us forget our personal need for help or our ability to help others. We addicts are great ones for getting caught up in problems which don't directly concern us and seem to have a characteristic fascination with taking sides.

Our First Step in recovery gives us a chance to get in touch with the fact that we lack the power to manage our lives and our First Tradition points to the fact that our best chance for survival lies with the group and not by going it alone. When we are critical of others or get our feelings hurt, we rebel and forget that we can give our very best to any situation before us by applying the principles of the Twelve Steps of N.A. We can surrender, ask for help, take our own inventory, allow defects to be removed, make amends, admit fault, pray, meditate and enjoy a spiritual awakening complete with principles and a renewed interest in the welfare of others who suffer like we do. Our criticisms and hurt feelings make us imagine that we are greater or lesser than someone. The pain which comes from these feelings requires us to make peace with our group in some way so that we can get on with our recoveries.

Because of the nature of our program, we often have to accept things which seem to go against common sense. Only through conscious contact with a power greater than ourselves can we hope to accept some of these things. Many living problems, group problems and problems affecting our unity, seem to have no solution until we can accept them as a reality over which we have no control whatsoever. Then, at least, we can truly ask for help with an open mind. Because of the love we have for one another, we sometimes have to let a member who is causing problems go on in their difficulty in hopes that they will in time come to see their inability to manage the affairs of N.A. at any level. Only in extreme cases is some sort of group action taken. We are none of us perfect people so it is generally thought best to stay well back from games of manipulation or control. Some of the changes we go through as groups of members take a while for us to become able to see a remedy. During these periods, our feelings of unity may suffer. We can get so caught up in things that it seems irrelevant to take the simplest view point. We can feel powerful and fall to error that way or feel that we are the only ones experiencing difficulty coming to terms with things the way they are and fall prey to the same error, namely we stop communicating our real feelings. We build a house of cards which always falls in on us. Cut off from the relief we should be finding at meetings, we seek to reinforce our own sick position by persuading others to our point of view. We seem to forget the effects we may be having on others. Meanwhile N.A.

goes on. Just as there can be no conflict between spiritual principles, there can be no real conflict between spiritual people. Appearances to the side, all we can engage in as members of N.A. is lovers quarrels and most of the suffering comes from different viewpoints or differences of information. It is natural to want to side with our friends. We can also, for the sake of unity, examine the other persons point of view and achieve some benefit. We can learn to hold our tongues when we would speak badly of another member. The old saying, love will find a way, seems to apply here, but for our purposes, our love must be very real to carry us through.

It is impossible to address unity without addressing feelings. Too often we have seen members shroud themselves in mystery and evasive action, when they could be enjoying themselves. Going against any one of the Traditions affects the ways members feel about their Program. When any of our members feel that N.A. is not "for real" their surrender is threatened and they may be cut off from the help they need to stay clean, stay happy and stay alive. These members are often on the sidelines and hear disturbing accusations and justifications which make them question the spiritual nature of our basic message of recovery from addiction. They may not stay around to see the problems resolved. If they are involved with the participants, they may get in over their heads and flounder amid heated debates or waste away during the cold war periods, when members are giving the other side a chance to cool off or growing through a process of self examination.

We have a right to be happy today and feel good about N.A. Sooner or later, we all make mistakes, especially when something we love is at stake. Without spiritual principles to guide us, we will take measures to insure against loss of what we love and this generally leads to a real mess. It is not the purpose or function of our service committees or service structure to keep N.A. alive. Thank God! No service committee in the world can keep even one addict clean. Only another member who cares can do that. The most important and the only essential service we can perform is that of personal service, directly filling the need of another addict who needs our help. It has been said that we don't even need a service structure. This might seem to be true for some rugged individualists at times in their recovery but where would they be if there had been no hotline, no H&I meeting, no literature, no meeting directory, no meeting or no member willing to talk to them when they first came in. We have needs as members and as groups which we would have to go to some trouble to meet without our N.A. service structure. Through N.A. we each pay a part of the price it takes to get our service need met. We can all feel good about our service effort. Our trusted servants take the emotional and financial support we give them and transform it into something wonderful. During crises it might help to comment on the fact that without the resources of the Fellowship of N.A., our servants would be on the street again. This makes them truly our servants,. It is our trust which makes them trusted. During difficult periods, it can be difficult to figure out who is on the power trip, the group or the individuals. Certainly without the group, the individual doesn't stand a chance but how about the group? A group which doesn't support good servants may have to go a while without the things which help other groups, areas and regions prosper until they figure out how badly they need the individuals talents and energy. The group can't have servants beyond what they are able to encourage and support.

This article has dealt with the feelings of our members and some of the interactions which affect our N.A. unity. As long as we can remember who we are, what we are, and where we came from, just that long will we be able to be grateful for what we have today through N.A. We are facing many changes today in N.A. but the Steps haven't changed and neither have the Traditions. None of us have to face our problems alone. In a sense we are still doing what we recovering addicts have always done: learning to use the resources available to us in N.A. to help ourselves and others live a better life clean. The Traditions allow us to

maintain the spiritual nature of our Program and focus our energies on recovery from addiction. They keep us from being troubled by things which have nothing to do with N.A. The source of our unity is the feeling within each of us reflected at the group level. This feeling reflects our gratitude and spiritual growth. It is the knowledge within that everything is going to be OK. No matter what this one does or that one. However, any particular item is voted on, who gets elected, whatever trouble we may be having, there will still be some N.A. members to sit around with and say, let's get on with the meeting. Recovery and the good feeling inside we get to share in meetings and with each other will always be the keys to N.A. and our sense of unity.

*** ** A FEW FINAL NOTES *** **

The response to our request for notification of those interested in remaining on our NEWSLINE mail list was staggering. Hundreds have returned the tear off address form. We will continue to use this forum to inform the Fellowship of news in the Fellowship.

On a personal note, a growing number of the Fellowship have learned of the recent hospitalization of our beloved friend Jimmy K. He has returned from the hospital and exploratory surgery for additional rest and recuperation. He will certainly need rest and the thousands of us who love Jimmy can help in the recuperation by letting the phone remain silent but keep him in our prayers and sending our love to him via his post office address, which is P.O. Box 1523, Sun Valley, Ca., 91353-1523.

Bob Stone