



# WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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TO: THE FELLOWSHIP

The Board of Trustees recently received a letter from a concerned member asking for an opinion from the Board as to whether the printing of the basic text "Narcotics Anonymous" by an individual, several individuals, a group or an area would constitute a violation of the Traditions. This member went on to state that his section of the country was faced with this.

The members of the Board of Trustees for years have heard rumors that NA approved literature was being printed in various parts of the country. However, this is the first direct and specific inquiry we have had wherein there is certain knowledge of the illegal printing. Many of us have long felt that, due to the nature of persistent rumors, there might be some truth to suspected illegal printing. However, having received a written inquiry we feel the need to address the situation.

The letter and prior allegations were discussed by the Board at our recent meeting. We feel the need to respond to the inquiry specifically and also advise the Fellowship as a whole.

The unauthorized printing of any conference approved literature including the Basic Text "Narcotics Anonymous" violates Traditions One, Four, Five and Ten.

Our First Tradition says, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity."

The illegal printing of conference approved literature threatens N.A. unity. The group conscience of the Fellowship years ago mandated that the printing of literature be done by the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. The World Service Office is responsible for printing and initial distribution of all literature for our Fellowship. Until such time as the conference decides otherwise, the World Service Office is singularly responsible for printing N.A. literature.

The World Service Conference, composed of

representatives from the entire Fellowship, is the unifying force in Narcotics Anonymous. For an individual, group or area to override the World Service Conference and print literature is a threat to the unity of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

As we find in Tradition number Four, "Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A. as a whole."

In our active addictions we wanted what we wanted and attempted to get it with little regard to others. We were arrogant, demanding and self willed, and as a consequence caused ourselves and others untold pain and suffering. In our recovery we attempt to change this, however, we are not always successful and frequently clean and sober we lapse into old ways and old ideas.

Individuals, groups or areas occasionally violate tradition under the name of autonomy by deciding that "we do not agree with the World Service Conference or, we don't like the way WSO is run or we think they charge too much for literature or the Text or something else that is not done exactly the way we think it should be done. Therefore, under the concept of our own group autonomy we will do what we think is best, even if that is to print our own and ignore the WSO."

These forms of thinking threaten the entire fellowship and thereby lay the foundation for violation of other Traditions that might get in the way of recovery, "the easy way". The illegal printing clearly violates the Fourth Tradition. It seriously affects other groups (by setting an example of "supposed acceptable behavior") and the whole Fellowship in an adverse way. There are appropriate ways to bring grievances against one or more service arms and there are ways to initiate a discussion within the Fellowship of any or all policies of the service arms. But a group conscience that disagrees with the policies of a service arm, does not have the right to have their self will override the collective group conscience of the World Service Conference.

The illegal printing is also a violation of Tradition Five. Such activity diverts those involved from the primary purpose of carrying the message to the still suffering addict. Further the diversion of the efforts of others from this primary purpose also occurs.

In Tradition Ten we find the seeds of another violation by illegal printing. WSO has been empowered by the Fellowship; by Groups, Area, Regions and the Conference directly, to hold in trust the copyrights of all Fellowships literature. For any individual or group to print literature is a violation of U.S. copyright

laws, not only a violation of Traditions. As the agent of the Fellowship, WSO is expected, in fact, required to protect our copyrights and must use legal means if necessary. Unfortunately, if WSO is to accomplish their duty by legal means, it would draw the N.A. name into public controversy.

We on the Board of Trustees would urge the Fellowship in the name of unity and our Traditions not to condone this flagrant violation of our Traditions either by "looking the other way" or purchasing the illegal literature. We would further strongly suggest that the individuals, groups or others involved or responsible for the printing be confronted and advised to discontinue such activity.

In loving service

Sally Evans  
Chairperson  
Board of Trustees