

OVERVIEW - PREAMBLE

Summary of Discussion of 3-9-90:

Greg: T's are non-negotiable by virtue of being spiritual principles which by definition are always true, therefore non-negotiable. They are statements of philosophy and warnings about the things we engage in. e.g. ought never be organized, has no opinion -- are warnings. They are designed for the groups, but the very same principles can be used by individuals and do carry through the service structure. For example, 7th T -- I apply the same principle of self support and self sacrifice in my life, but I don't refuse a gift of money from my mom or refuse giving charity to another. Also, T3 isn't the only requirement for election to chair of whatever, but the principle of openness and the right to participate in the service structure is a right of membership and it applies. Service and the right of membership is one of the ways in which we fulfill our 9th, 11th, & 12th steps. T1 is philosophy, T12 is philosophy statement and warning.

Tom: The traditions are -- protection, vital to survival, upheld voluntarily --

Bob McK: set of spiritual principles which help me get away from myself so that I can fit into a larger body. Guide the NA group, but also guide me so I can be part of the group and society. Point us to 1 - Unity and 2 - Purpose. Define the purpose for all of us. Not meant as static laws.

Kim: manifestations of the principles to give a way to live them in this organization. They are "rules" in a sense. Every spiritual organization has them. If we live by them or don't live by them, there are consequences. Volatility of some meetings is reflection of the fact that most of us come in with little idea of how to function in any group setting, let alone a spiritual group. If I try to apply these, something positive always happens - the consequences of my decisions are much more joyful and productive. They help me shift my attitude and thinking to another perspective which I don't normally have.

Jack: Preamble has come to have more meaning and should have more of a place in the work.

Stretch: sees an ascending order -- individual - group - service structure -- whole fellowship. Preamble begins and is about individual, as T's go on there is this progression. T12 is at end by design and encompasses all.

Greg: develop the interrelatedness of T's and to the steps. Historically, the first N.A. Bylaws (1953) mention the 12 T's of NA. The 12 original T's were approved by AA in July 1950.

Steve B.: AA formulated theirs out of mistakes and did things as a "Tradition", or custom. We adopted them and have tried to follow them. If we follow them, we will stay out of trouble. Our mistakes give us reasons to continue to follow them.

Jack: likes outline presented by Stretch. lends to viewing as a package. Steps are intended to be viewed in a similar sense. The Preamble is prophetic and lets us know that the struggles in service and groups are guaranteed to lead to the state of "all will be well". Struggles can be divided into those that would tear us apart and those that would keep us together -- these are obviously a lot stronger because we have grown. All will be well means all IS well. This needs more focus rather than each T specifically. This is the collective approach which is vital.

Mitch: Preamble is original and is ours, developed in early 1960's.

Stretch: growth comes in controversy, not in harmony. Faith that all will be well means that we can live with controversy at any level. Make strong case for the last 12 words of preamble.

Kim: the way out, the way to freedom is through working the steps. Same is true for freedom for the groups. Freedom used to mean do whatever you want. Now it means follow the direction of the principles and freedom comes -- a paradox. Can always choose not to and experience the lack of freedom. Going against every self-centered thing in us.

Jack: What is the interpretation of "rules"? What is the reaction to "rules". Freedom, controversy, harmony have also taken on new meanings in recovery. Define terms in this writing. "Controversy" in T-10 has different meaning to us than in a group or service setting. We share a difficulty in confronting one another and disturbing a false harmony. Freedom can include controversy in a healthy way. It is our reaction to controversy which is a problem. Any definitions of terms should be in terms of how we use them, not a dictionary definition.

Greg: ties that bind are the T's. Awareness and surrender to the T's . Vigilance is watchfulness. Freedom is a state of being unencumbered and unrestrained. Lack of personal internal conflict is a point of freedom. Surrender means letting go of the need to fight and the internal conflict. Nancy: doing the right things for the right reasons--reference Basic Text--this is vigilance. The T's are basis of relationships and sequence - God first.

Greg: T's are a definition of relationships. Each T has a relation to self, society, service, God.

Jack: Was discussion beneficial? To me it was. This is input which won't come from other places.

Mitch: Relationship of Ad Hoc Committee to BOT - is this clear to everyone?

Greg: The committee is a special committee of the BOT. As a Trustee not assigned to the committee, I am OK with it all.

Danette: My understanding was that, based on minimal response by trustees, there was no need for more active involvement until the committee reached a different stage of the project. Now that we have, I sense that there will be more involvement by trustees - i.e. rotating more trustees into our meetings. Do we, the ad hoc members, know how we will use this information? We are still somewhat unclear on where to go from here. How involved will the ad hoc group be in the writing, will more trustees be involved, etc.

Will there be a transcript? Not word for word. Copy of the tapes? No. There will be access, but no copies distributed because of poor quality, no copyright releases, no pre-structuring for taping this discussion.

Greg: My role as a trustee in this? Any activity will come as a specific request?

Jack: I see the responsibility of nonmember trustees to read the reports, become involved if personally necessary, ask for verbal reports, input to the BOT on any needed changes in direction of committee. Responsibility is to review the minutes, plans, and drafts. Lack of response implies satisfaction.

more discussion -- Kim and Tom disagreeing on conceptual idea of T's being rules!

Kim: If groups don't adhere to the spirit of these "rules", then they are not N.A. and we should say so. You can do it any way you want, but if it isn't in this spirit, it is not NA.

Tom: T's are guidelines because our experience has been through trial and error. Propensity to abuse the concept of T's being "rules". I have yet to see any group totally stay within the T's. If deviation is extreme, the group falls apart. The mechanism to perpetuate existence is built-in.

TRADITIONS DISCUSSION

TRADITION ONE

3/09/90

Stretch: I think I really didn't want to be first because my perspective, really I didn't want come this week but I came because I was told to be here by Jack. Jack told me I had to be here. I feel that this is the very weak portion of my role of the Board of Trustees. The Traditions, because I really have a hard time understanding. Frankly, I understand other people had a hard

time understanding. I figure that everybody knew exactly what they were and I was the one that didn't understand it. I really thought that way. So I looked at Greg, I like to listen to Greg because he seems to have such an overview of each item, each word. I like Number One because I live with an addict, as some of you know. I got involved with Narcotics Anonymous because I lived for many years with an addict. When she went into recovery that thing that I had a great deal of difficulty dealing with the selfishness of personal recovery. And that personal recovery was such a selfish thing that it was to exclusion of my marriage and the exclusion of everything else. In Number One what I see is a statement that the semi-colon really brings out. The important thing for everybody in this room and for everybody in Narcotics Anonymous really is their personal recovery. But they worded it backwards and they did it on purpose in Number One, that I see is because they are saying personal recovery may be the most important thing that you have to do for yourself. But the common welfare has to come first, without the common welfare there is no personal recovery. I like the structure of the sentence. Again I'm not going to deal with the feeling of it because I don't have that. I like the way this is structured and I think the structure of the sentence is really important. The common interest of N.A. is so important that without that all or many in this room wouldn't be sitting here today. That is what I see in Number One and I think that is really a very important start for the traditions

Tom: What I was mentioning earlier about our history, is a real strong example of how we didn't adhere to this tradition. We didn't really practice the tradition, how it effected us. A few months ago I was writing something, looking at the fact that we started in 1953, over almost a 20 year period we hardly grew. After 20 something years it is very very small. Even when we started to get a little bit of growth, for some reason, there's areas where the regions just couldn't get going. Back then we had a very strong dependence on area existence. I Remember talking to, I forget who it was, I think it was Dutch and somebody else and they had went to another Service Office and they had talked with them about the ... fellowship, traditions and stuff. And they had said to Dutch, one of the reasons after all these years the fellowship has never really grown is because you never really adhere to the traditions here. I think that is a horrible example for us because of what really happened to us. I know an example in Hawaii that happened, is we started in 1972 and by 1978 I think we had two meetings. I knew of hundreds and hundreds of addicts that came through them doors to those two meetings and made a transfer straight to A.A. and never came back to N.A. If anything that would affect our common welfare, yet I know hundreds of other addicts that never made that transition from N.A to A.A. and as a result they went back out because there wasn't no unity in N.A. There was no strengthening there at that time. It is a real strong example of how common welfare has to come first. In this handy thing that Jack brings up all the time about the

difference between unity, uniformity, conformity. How that's something been really confused and misunderstood in our fellowship. We use this term unity to mean uniformity. How we suppose to adhere to things that are also directed to the same topics. Should we talk a little about using some of A.A.'s history, well this is our own history of N.A. We can use A.A. as an example but other fellowships as well. We get out of line I know, bring out literature, try meetings and these kind of things.

Kim: I remember when Tom shared the Hawaii experience which parallels things that I have observed in New Mexico, when I lived there, with the fellowship that finally got it's own identity. I am not sure where it is at right now, I just visited there, up around Santa Fe it is a little shaky. One of the things that I think that brought one of those turning points in terms of our common welfare should come first and that the common welfare of ongoing recovery for addicts in Narcotics Anonymous that my personal recovery depends on that I think we are at another shift and another turning point. In order for addicts like me to get the kind of recovery that I need in meetings, there are issues and things that need to be addressed that go way beyond just using drugs. That one of the things that happens and I really don't know if how we discuss it or if we should discuss it in this ... a lot of people who need meetings stop going to meetings after several years. Now, we can say that it is just because of that they can't follow through and that they don't have any discipline or we can actually ask ourselves if it is because our meetings don't really address the persons recovery needs of addicts after a certain point. I think that is partially the issue. I go to a lot of N.A. meetings where most of what's talked about has very little bearing on my personal recovery at this point. And I think that is something we need to look at. We need to talk about because our common welfare does come first if most of the people with six and seven years and over are no longer in the meetings. There are people around that I can share ongoing recovery with but there are a very few of them. That really affects my personal recovery, it affects my life. I don't even know where to go with this but I feel that kind of experience that Tom talked about that when people start leaving N.A. because they need to get, they left N.A. in Hawaii because there wasn't unity there. They couldn't find the recovery that they wanted that N.A. was offering. I am suggesting that I think the same thing is happening in Narcotics Anonymous now that people are going to outside meetings, are going to CODA, they are going to ACOA, they are going to places because they need help with issues that are ongoing in their recovery that are frankly common to almost all of us. I don't know if maybe that's good, maybe what that does is open us up to another bunch of people and we need to do that in our lives. There's a part of me that believes that thing of the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel whether it is I am dealing with my childhood issues or what ever you want to call them or just ongoing life just trying to live in the world and trying to learn how to be intimate in my relationships. That's part of our

common welfare seems to me is that we really do address the ongoing needs of recovery of addicts in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. We are losing people with time for some of the very same reasons that N.A. didn't keep people in Hawaii and any where else. It is because it didn't offer ongoing recovery to those people the way it was being handled, N.A. was like a transition point into something else you had to go to A.A. to get your recovery because N.A. didn't have that sense of unity and addressing the needs. So I want to bring it up because it is an issue that I hear with almost every addict I talk to who has over about 5 to 6 years of recovery and it is certainly a burning issue in my life.

Jack: I know I shared the same experience and the solution that I come to believe in is what I put into the meeting. There's a lot of stuff I never brought into meetings. I thought I was there, once I had five, six, seven years, to share about my brilliant knowledge of the steps and the principles the steps provided and ... what full recovery is, but didn't talk about a lot of issues and didn't honestly share what was going on with me, what it really come down to. To some degree I believe that is what I was taught, that is what I saw mirrored in the meetings I attended. People didn't talk about these issues so once again I know I came to a point in my recovery where I felt like once again I was different then everybody else. That I was alone in these issues and therefore wasn't going to bring them up and scare the shit out of all the newcomers. Which brings on another thing that a lot of service meetings and a lot of what comes out is always about the newcomer. One of the things that I know has disturbed me a great deal in the literature work that has been done on the steps is 95% of it seems to be geared to the newcomer. I think that is something we need to look at. Do we go overboard on that? Do we keep things at a level that is only geared to the newcomer that sets up that process of once you get your three, four or five years that where do my needs get met? But I think also the more we do, we talk to one another those of us that have the five, six, seven and more years clean in talking to one another because as a result of coming to that experience and also for me eventually finding that I stopped wanting to go to meetings because I was carrying this big bag of shit and this ridiculous responsibility into meetings all the time of what I was suppose to do in there which was basically going against my principles because you're suppose to go to meetings and be honest. Then you talk about issues that maybe a lot of people don't even want to hear about. I think we have to be careful how we do that, stop coming in and talking about what now seems to be terms of other fellowships, "child within", ACA issues, etc. I don't see that as ACA issues. I see that as my living issues whatever we want to call them, but yet we seem to come in and start carrying on this way which all the purists comes out of everybody and we discount what they are saying because they say they have an ACA issue. Regardless of the fact that I identify with the feeling and the whole process but it doesn't count here because I refer to a child within. There is all

kinds of stuff that are issues that often aren't talked about. There often is a lack of tolerance that we have in meetings of people that are snivelling. They're not suppose to snivel in meetings. I think there is a healthy way to snivel in meetings. I hope there is a healthy way to snivel in meetings.

Jack: ...So that the newer people will begin to realize that it is okay. Whatever the difficulties are I'm going through it is okay to bring to a meeting. One of the awarenesses that I came to is that of dysfunctional systems, you know it's a nice popular term now dysfunction, I came to a brilliant realization that this system that we are involved in has no choice to be but dysfunctional because it was designed by a whole lot of dysfunctional people. There are dysfunctional elements to the system and to the practice of what goes on right at the group level more so then any place else. I think it is only by our example that it is going to change.

Greg: I tend to think that our groups are dysfunctional due to the competition of dysfunctional human beings rather than the fact that our groups are dysfunctional by itself. I really do think the potential for real healthy positive groups is there. I was told when I was coming around that groups were not the place for problems. The first and foremost primary purpose of the group was to carry the message, and there are ties to other traditions obviously. That there were some other purposes like socialization, getting information, learning, mutual support, there were a number of others but that the groups were for carrying the message to the addict that stills suffers. I was taught that was the newcomers ... So I approach that a little differently. First Tradition and again it is tough talking about one with out talking about the rest. I think the First Tradition is one of those that relates pretty well across the board. There is this idea of the traditions being tied to unity or if anonymity is a spiritual foundation then unity is the practical foundation. I think that is the quote that somebody used. There is a transition that takes place from focus on personal use, personal welfare to what is best for the group for the conglomerate of members in the group setting. You assemble your members in a group setting. I wasn't very good in figuring out, but I was always looking out for Greg and what Greg could get. As long as I kept that mindset now I didn't think much of recovery, personal recovery was in short supply. Long as I had that mindset that I am here to get what I can get for me. What can I get out of you? Who can I hustle? Who can I abuse? Who can I violate? Who can I hit on? I didn't have much recovery. When my thinking through the Twelve Step process starting shifting from personal welfare to acknowledgment that I couldn't do it, that my best ideas got me here that I, I is a dirty word ... to more of a group mentality of being a small part of a greater whole ,then I began to experience what I call recovery. My personal recovery benefited from submerging myself in the group. By losing myself to the welfare of the group I began to find some personal recovery. By becoming an N.A. member, by

committing myself to Narcotics Anonymous and letting go of the I wants and the I wills and all that self-obsess crap to the best of my ability ... personal recovery. I believe our lives depend on stable and healthy N.A. meetings. I think that is what maybe people lose sight of, that drift away, is that focus in our lives that depend on stable company. People that I've talked to that slipped who slipped away from N.A. have come to believe that something else is what they need -- other things may be their marriage, their job or involvement in other activities, coaching little league baseball or whatever. That's what they really start looking for, those things will give them what they need in life. ... they may have gotten started on the real road of learning, Narcotics Anonymous but now they don't need that or they may have found one of the others. I heard some refer to OF, other fellowships as they say, perhaps the volume they needed in OF and not needed to be here, that's what the people I talk to say who have drifted away. Their priorities have changed, they seem to have forgotten that or changed their opinions on the fact that their life depended upon their involvement in N.A., stable, healthy N.A. meetings. Spiritual principles tied into this -- certainly unity, giving of self, spiritual principles that could be developed by surrender, letting go of self-will and embracing what is best for the group, compromise, those are a few. The focus on what is best for the group so the group will survive so it will be available to me ... Following up on that Kim was talking about, people grow in a group and you talk about losing old-timers I believe that a group will always reflect the needs of its members. If the meetings of the members are full focus on issues and items that are basically newcomers, that's what the needs of the group are that is where the group is going to be, old-timers will be getting what they need and hopefully they'll go ahead and start a new group. I see that this ongoing musical group scenario possible. You have this group here, it's lots and lots of newcomers and the old-timers are not getting what they need so they go over here and start a new group. When the old-timers turn up absent from this new group of newcomers some are growing up and replacing them, those are saying they are not getting what I need, I'm going to the old-timers meeting so they go to the old-timers meeting. As the newcomers, younger members grow and go to the old-timers meeting, the old-timers aren't getting what they need they go start another group. When the ship falls it kind of like round and round and round and round and where it stops no one knows. What I learned personally is that if I enter a meeting with the mind set that I am going to get what I need for my personal recovery I'll hear it. If I enter a meeting with a mind set that this meeting is bull shit and I am not going to hear what I need to hear, I do not hear nothing. What I get out of the meeting depends more on me, in my attitude then it does what takes place in the meeting. I believe that our newcomers say some of the most profound things that I have ever hear, I believe in the prospect that God works through people and if I am willing to listen and treat my meetings as a form of meditation then I will get everything that I need out of every meeting I go to. So far it has been

working. I struggle to with going to meetings and going, doesn't anybody have what I need. Well, I was setting myself up. I was looking for the stuff I find in it. If I can go into a meeting and listen look for the presence of God and a message that involves God's will for me I will find it, it has never failed.

Jack: I was listening to you, I was comparing it to our discussion last night. How I would define that, people reaching four or five years and going somewhere else is Second Step stuff. People just getting to the point with a living problem but when they got manageability and they think they've worked Twelve Steps and the answer lies some where else and they go. We can define that answer, but what we talked at dinner last night and what we talked about this morning, what we talked about here is how we can't define it. You don't have an answer. I don't have an answer. Greg didn't have an answer. Stretch didn't have it. What we offered each other was the presence. I think that is what the spiritual principles of this tradition lies in. We offer each other our presence while we endure the learning process. Maybe in another fellowship, they already have that experience, but we are still growing and there is still a significant amount of us that don't have it. We don't have the answers. When we started off we didn't have anybody who had any time. Then we made tremendous mistakes. Everybody wanted to be the chairperson the first week and by the end of the first year we couldn't get anybody to take a position, the ego was gone. The sense of it is that we can learn together and somehow we could get through it together. We can find a common answer instead of one of us trying to figure out what the answer is. We can take a lot of shared experience. We have it now, all that stuff we were talking about the Second Step stuff that you talk about. There are some other issues that we don't have answers to yet as a fellowship and we are still in process. The only way we are going to find those answers is to stay together through that unity and to offer each other presence during struggle, not an answer just a ear to listen, just somebody to be involved with. We don't have to get back into that bag of self will of isolation and loneliness. The other principle I see and I think it differs for the principle of surrender, that is a principle of sacrifice. I think the sooner we start talking about the principle of sacrifice with folks the easier that becomes. That sacrifice takes up in terms of time and we sacrifice our personal life. Most of us come in to a meeting or group with an idea of just how it should go. I belong to this thing so therefore I have some personal right to that. I think in order for us to grow together as a group we have to sacrifice that, that's the price that we pay. But I think the surrender is the actual willingness to let it go. People have to come to understand that there is a sacrifice. When we come together as a group, even when we come together here as a group, we go through this process of letting go of self before we really start to click and there's a price we pay. We all get aggravated with each other when we are trying to do that group process. So it requires personal sacrifice. I think

we need to expand a little on the personal sacrifice. The other thing I was thinking is unity, how we going to define unity. Is it majority rules, or ? We found out where that goes. If we try to focus some of that unity in making sure that everybody at our meeting has a sense of belonging. If we try to set an atmosphere of belonging, an atmosphere of hey we are glad you are here. You don't have to agree with everything and we don't have to agree on everything, we don't have all the answers, but we want you to be a part of it. We are glad you are here. I'm just thinking when we start a lot of new meetings I sat in a church with ... myself. When the guy came through the door I was glad to see him and I let him talk sometimes. I wanted him to come back next week. It's only when we got three or four of us when we could have the luxury of starting the nit picking, talking about each other. But it is that reaching out and making the people have a sense of belonging that they can get that concept from this tradition that our common welfare means of belonging, that there is a place for us and the place is Narcotics Anonymous and we can take identification with that. The other thing that I was thinking about is this relates with what we talked about the living problems. That is what people resolve early by five years, they resolve most of the living problems. You either end up in divorce or reconcile one or gotten some measure of stability, but we often don't talk in our meetings about the emotional growth, issues of emotional growth in the relation to spiritual growth. We don't talk about now that you've taken everything or you think you have taken everything or you think you got everything, that is a self perception, I think our sanity comes back somewhere around four or five years we think we have gotten it all and we really haven't gotten very much. Our next phase of getting comes from learning to give it back or we stop focus on being the takers, that what the common welfare is, you start getting the focus off of the taking all the time then the starting to give and then we trust that some how our higher power is going to give us what we need. Because for a lot of us around this room we're the old-timers in our area. There is just not a whole lot of people, like Kim said, who you feel you can do that but some how we all end up being together ... to hear those issues. The other part I was thinking about how to define group. I have a home group that is scattered out, these are the people that I recovered with. These are the people I spent the first years of my recovery every day with. Now we're scattered all over the country now. But there is something that has happened to us with levels of trust, with levels of being able to get through the bull shit real quick or that general love and caring that still keeps us together as a group. We still see ourselves as a group. In terms of the spiritual body of people that nurture us I think we resolved as we go through this thing. One of the hardest things is the degree that our telephone plays in relationship to our molding of this fellowship and how we do a lot of our sharing with the people we sponsor long distance over the telephone. Hopefully in years to come that won't be as necessary, you'll be able to sponsor people locally and be sponsored locally.

Stretch: I think there's a situation that when I see old-timers at the meeting that don't come as regularly as they should come maybe or whether they have social functions they do instead. There is something to be said in Tradition No. One, the difference between recovery and staying clean. People think because they stay clean for four or five years and that's recovery and they go to a meeting and something should be addressed there. One of the things that we discussed in our committee are things we thought were important for the fellowship to discuss was that question, How to keep old-timers connected with their meeting? That is one of the things that we came up with a month or so ago because we thought it was an important issue and I think you brought it back how do you make the common welfare come first. How you make the common welfare come first by serving the group or by serving N.A. as a whole or by being in service or by being there for the newcomer. You got five years clean you need to be there to tell your stories to the newcomer, you got to be there to stand up and say I have five years clean and I did it, to give hope to the newcomer. You got to be there to be there for him. You don't get that personal recovery without being there for the common welfare, I kind of think that is what the First Tradition says. Unity is the ability to be together and to share the strength and hope and we can disagree without being disagreeable and make sure it works. I kind of think there is a problem, I think there is a lot of discussion out there the newcomer is the one and the newcomer is this and sometimes I've went to meetings where five, six weeks in a row they got people sharing with very little clean time. I see people around the room walking out and they say well I can't relate to this. I don't have that problem because when I go to a meeting with my wife, I got to the meeting and I sit there, I listen because I learn something every meeting. I learn enough of life important message in every meeting from everybody and when I see someone who relapse with three, four years, five years, they come back in that blows my mind. When somebody got six, seven years clean and they share they had a shitty day today, I felt like you, wait a minute you have seven, eight years clean how can you feel like that. I'm saying to myself, I guess that's just the way it is. So I learned something. I assumed that if somebody is sitting next to me that they can relate to that and I think recovery is the true word for Number One. Recovery, not just being clean, practicing and keeping and staying in recovery.

Kim: I just want to say that I really hear what people are saying and I really know that a lot of times when I don't get a lot out of a meeting it is my attitude. I am aware of that and also know that it is real easy to sit around a group of addicts and I've done it and said, talk about all these traitors who went off and went to A.A., just sat there and bad rap the people who left. Sit there and talk about the people who, they must be insane, their disease kicked up again. You know what, maybe not. Maybe there is something

wrong with our meeting, maybe there is something that needs to change about the way the fellowship is operating in that community or wherever. It's too easy to always point the finger out and say they are leaving because they're not from ... How about us asking, why don't they stay? What is it that we're doing. A lot of people that stay around frankly are the ones like me that get their ego needs met by doing service. Those are a lot of the people that you see in meetings who yea, you can say are giving it away and all that stuff, and that's true. I also get my self esteem stroke by doing service and if somebody by having service positions. I don't mean just by doing ashtrays at meetings. But I just really encourage people to not just point a finger at them, saying well they must not be spiritually fit today because they are not hearing the rules of wisdom from the mouth of the newcomer, but maybe in fact there are things we as a fellowship can do to better serve all addicts in our meeting and that people leaving doesn't necessarily just mean they are messed up. Maybe we can change, maybe we can make ourselves ... less of them ... when you were about 16 years sober that A.A. had to start addressing emotional sobriety or they weren't going to be meeting the needs of their members that the emotional part which you were talking about ... an issue, it doesn't mean if we are not just focus on helping that person not use today doesn't mean emotional needs that we have, that we don't need to address emotional recovery ongoing recovery. I am saying I don't hear things I need to hear to help me with my business of living doesn't mean that I don't go and my heart doesn't open up every time I'm at a meeting because there's so many there getting clean. I feel that love but I have been nuts and suicidal in recovery. I have felt like dying and I've been going to seven meetings a week waiting to hear somebody give me a clue on how ... going through there. Also getting people when I would share at those meetings really getting the message that people didn't want to hear that from old-timers from seven years down the road, it scared them. I'm just saying in here this is an opportunity when Jack talked about our steps work so much importance have been written and addresses the needs of the newcomer. I would like to see N.A. give the fellowship something that provides ongoing recovery toward addicts, I don't care how much clean time they have. There are the things that we write, the service materials that we are developing, the stuff that we are writing at least open up our minds to that to maybe we don't know, maybe there is some other stuff that needs to be going on in these meetings and we need to challenge people to at least think about it and not just to say well they left and went off to something else and they just forgot they were powerless. Maybe not, maybe it starts here. I know that there's, I agree with so much of what you said because I locked in and cut myself out of what happening there with that attitude. I think both are true, I think we just need to keep an open mind about that.

Steve: I go back on a couple of things I heard about like people ... everytime I hear that and too often I heard it on the podium. I have gone to this other

group because I got my needs met there. I got what I needed and what I needed I needed more. When I heard about the selflessness on the tradition and it really kind of struck. I need to maybe get into the giving part. Which brings up, this tradition is like always somehow secondary to where the problem of this tradition comes about after the problem with other traditions ... vice versa. It is always you get into this unity over some other thing, like who's contributing and who isn't. Who's speaking at meetings and who isn't. What language you are using and what book you are reading from etc. I somehow never get the jest of what I was getting around here. I never even thought of this tradition in those respects.

Woman: In the beginning of that move I thought it was all me, then I realize that there's really something wrong with a fellowship that is as segregated as the fellowship that I am in. That it is gay, black and black leather, basically. Lot of the things I have seen at those three groups of people is that they really believe that the common welfare depends on Narcotics Anonymous being perpetuated as they see it. If anything changes their whole recovery is threatened. It's given me a little more compassion about what is happening. It doesn't make it any less painful, but that's what people are really viewing is common welfare is Narcotics Anonymous as they see it or whether it will work for them and hanging on to it. That is what they are asking that somewhere perpetuated that definition of common welfare. Literally and ... don't agree with me but that's the way it is. I haven't been in a recovery meeting lately where I haven't heard that said. I know enough to stay. I don't think I would stay if ... If I had a choice I really honestly, I mean I hate to say this I don't know if I would stay. I know enough to stay there and work through the kind of pain it brings up for me but there's something wrong. I really believe that what it hinges on that's what they believe they are protecting. Somewhere I hear a lot of discussion lately about issues like Kim brought up or languages. In Northern California at the Northern California Convention trying to go to Narcotics Anonymous speakers, is the big controversy -- language. On and on lots of different issues could hinge on that in our lack of willing to define that word. We are coming to terms with common welfare is change and growth and is inclusive. Our common welfare doesn't exclude, it does not drive people away. How you verbalize that I don't know.

Tom: Something about our common welfare - I see it as my welfare. It needs to be said here I think in terms of, it hurts is what happens there are people I got clean with in New York long before N.A. The people that gave me life really are no way part of this fellowship because of because of ... the things we talked about here, that hurts. That's a reality, that happens to a lot of us that stayed in N.A. We don't have meetings that deal with these issues that we are talking about. Most people are afraid to venture into something new, something different. We do something really well in terms of getting people

clean and go extreme and then we don't deal with ... what it is all about. I think that is something maybe we need to touch right here in terms of what is our common welfare. I understand what you are saying also Becky in terms of the special interest that seems to tear us apart. That's very ... New Yorkers where now some controversy between the Latin population in our fellowship. We got a letter here that was ... they call themselves the Concerned Latinos of N.A. and so prejudices and fears are fostered . I need to go some place where they dress the same way as me or they think about the same something that's different and we foster that. We allow that to continue and sacrifice something in terms of all the common welfare . Maybe if we all knew what we are going to do we just get people's opinions and we bring them to a point and then say if you want to deal with these issues they need to go somewhere else. We have something that is really important and that is what's here is the presence. The reason I don't go to another fellowship is because if I'm in a ACOA meeting dealing with some issue that means that I'm not in an N.A. meeting dealing with an issue. I kind of feel that I've experienced that because my network is tremendous so I try it, I've gone to other things to see ... So it come back to the presence. I need to be in the N.A. meeting until it happens. I don't know when it's gonna happen, whether we address it here in terms of ... presence is the thing that I see key in.

Man: I was going to say something similar along that line. My responsibility for years is to be part of this active membership. Not just membership but active membership. The way I as an individual factor this First Tradition is through being part of it. The only way to feel like a part of it is to be a part of it. The only way that I can practice the principle of community is being united with other recovering addicts in this thing we call Narcotics

Anonymous.

Danette: There are a couple of things I'm not quite sure about if we are saying it differently or if it is really different. One thing is the use of the word sacrifice I caught it a few times already that just sits so wrong. I don't believe that I am meek, sacrifice isn't a spiritual life, we are practicing spiritual principles. What came closer for me was the loss itself and that is very positive and beneficial in my recovery in practicing for the common welfare and being apart of the group and unity is loss of self. I begin in the steps and then I learn to apply differently as far as my participation in the group. Well there are two things that's something I want to add to the discussion but is also a hope that we don't have to use the word sacrifice to much. The selflessness we practice when we are looking towards the welfare of the group is once again that thing that Kim talked about being paradoxical ... when we think that we are losing something we're giving up something or sacrificing something is really ... gaining the most. That's all I need to say.

Kim: I would just really hate to see this common welfare thing become some kind of instrument for the thing on special interest meanings. I believe

common welfare is being willing to recognize differences in people, recognize the needs, different focuses that one thing a group might do is have a beginners meeting, run a speaker discussion meeting on the steps and run a meeting that deals with intimacy that on a ongoing basis that what people wanted to talk about was their intimacy, whatever. Or it might run a gay meeting that special interest meetings I do not believe are inherently in opposition to our common welfare and I do believe that prejudice and separation are, and there's a difference in that. I really believe that, I just wanted to say that I think we need to be careful, be aware that people do use this common welfare thing as a way to tell people you are going to be alike or you're not a good N.A. member. It doesn't mean that like you said uniformity. That isn't what this is about, personal recovery. This is about personal recovery, without personal recovery we don't have anything else. Our personal recovery does depend on N.A. unity but it is ultimately about this soul getting to God. That's ultimately what this is about and yours and yours. I can't teach somebody to swim, jump in and do that until I can swim myself. I think we can get ahead of ourselves sometimes on expecting. I love what you said what's happening up in Northern California and in some of those areas of expecting people before I am spiritually fit enough I am going to go and decide what common welfare is and kick the shit out of people and that's just how I am going to do it.

Steve: I do not have any place else to go but N.A. and it always scares me if personal recovery depends on N.A. unity, it's like oh my God what's going to happen to me if there is not N.A. Narcotics Anonymous is where I identify. You talk about people leaving. I don't think personally, it has anything to do with N.A. It may just be another way to identify, they don't identify with you. That's okay, this is where I identify and I feel I have responsibility to the group to help maintain and this is common welfare, that I have to give my part of maintaining an atmosphere of recovery and health and part of that is if I am in a fucked up space sharing that because I feel I do an injustice to the newcomer if I sit and say oh life is a party it's wonderful and I am dying inside. I feel I am doing an injustice and I am not carrying an honest message. It works and some days I have bad days but I have the tools to get out. I feel that the principle in this tradition is that it is open-minded and caring and sharing and giving back what was so freely given to me. I also put what's best for the group, cannot be bad for me. I don't think it can be, what is good for the group I don't think it's going to be bad.

Tom: I remember I was also the youngest person there inactive in the service. I never had a real longing for identification. I remember reading something in some literature, it said something about that I can create a fellowship around me by sharing That always stuck with me. I might have a real need to talk about some things that I don't think is appropriate. That doesn't mean that N.A. doesn't have a formula. I can create a type of fellowship around me in N.A. by starting a meeting to share all those kinds of things. Its just things that are on a deeper level that's all. Eighty percent of

the meetings and 90% of the meetings that exist in Hawaii relate to getting clean and the other relate to staying clean. There's little relation to living clean. I believe that's my responsibility to do that. There's certainly lots of people in N.A. who are clean or went out who would just love to see a meeting get started that goes to a deeper level than that. ... there's got to be strong ties with a people support system. There is something about this common welfare and this bond that every time something comes up about this sensitivity and someone says "I don't need this", it does really hurt. I feel like I'm giving God a chance cause I need it as much as I would hope you'd need me. I've known people with lots and lots of years of clean time that have went out and used so this is my life, this was given to me as a gift I'm not into junking it so I can be saved somewhere else. I know this tradition how it effects you. N.A. communities, particular like internationally, it's vital to understand what this really means is if something forces against them, without the benefit of having a strong region close by to help them out. In writing this tradition, we're responsible to make ... make real clear that it is real important to this and that hundreds and thousands addicts ... not just for us it's for the future ...

Bob: I just want to say that this is really emotional this discussion really ...

Jack: I'm going to lock into the word sacrifice and lock into the principles that surrounds that whether we want to say we'll address part of accepting personal responsibilities or this is going to require giving or if we even say recovery not a spectators sport, involvement. I don't care how we say it, it's that principle of putting something in and you're going to get something back. The other part was that of defining our common welfare. I was looking for a way to promote our needs resolution to help us answer our basic needs, need to belong, need for exceptance, our need to recognize those feelings. Also we should promote our growth, I don't think we talk enough about what we need to do to promote continual growth. The other concept that I saw that I don't know if it fits here or not, but that's the concept of grace, that unwarranted, unmerited free gift. There's some ... some grace flows in our meetings or something happens here of the spiritual nature. We're in California now it's called cosmic reality. There's a principle there that I think we need to some how define which we know what that is. Somebody just mentioned this briefly and went over it but that was like taking recovery for granted. I see that as a message to ... a couple of years and we start taking recovery for granted. What made me think of it was when Stretch was talking about he gets something out of every meeting. If I ... to an open meeting, she gets overwhelmed, she gets emotional at every meeting. I take her to and when she talks to people and she oh there's something special that happens there at these things. I think those of us who receive that gift sometimes just take it for granted. I think somehow we need to talk about that, I don't know how, how we are going to do that but that's important.

Man: I think Tradition Number One is a real opportunity for the committee to discuss some of the problems that exists in the fellowship. Some of the

things we don't talk about could be addressed in common welfare and make a point that it works inspite of you, because the sameness of the people is what so much more important than the differences. The uniqueness of the addiction. The uniqueness of the one addict helping another. Uniqueness of people coming together for recovery, uniqueness of people saving each others ass is more important than the prejudice and the disruption ... I think it is a real opportunity to address that in a very positive way and instead of a negative way. Without a negative aspects of prejudice, but the important thing is that inspite of the prejudice it works, inspite of prejudice people get what they need to get if they come to meetings and if they seek recovery. I think that the thing grows from Tradition Number One it goes back up to the Preamble which says as long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that can tear us apart. If we address in Number One the differences and the problems it gives us the opportunity and time to ... back up instead of going forward. I kind of think that ... that is holding these things tied together but I hate to see it written in such a way that in One we discuss One through Twelve. But to go from the Preamble to One and go One back to the Preamble I find the writing style I can relate to a lot better than saying gee One ties in with Twelve and Eleven, Seven and Four and Five. I think there is a real opportunity here for the committee to address those things in Number One.

Man: I made two major moves in my recovery, one at nine years and one at twelve years and I suffered both times. Because I wasn't getting my needs met, I wasn't getting those needs or living clean rather than getting clean. That's rough, I think about my home group when that was said that continue to getting clean, stay clean, living clean. About living clean, ... My live depends on my ability to let go of my ego and my sick sense itself and become a part of and grace of Narcotics Anonymous. Depends on being able to find similarities rather than differences. Why I'm stuck on differences are what kept me sick. The way I am different from you is death, it's a prescription for death the way I knew. I can find ten thousand ways we are different and if I embrace some of those I'll never be a part of I'll never be a part of the NA unity. I'll never feel unity, I'll never feel united with the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Another thing that popped in was, there's a spiritual principle, they didn't talk about much, it's a principle of discrimination. That's not separation ... we find it in the Serenity Prayer. There's a difference that ties in with this idea discriminating what is best for the group from my sick ego, my distorted sense itself and my needs. Discrimination in terms of being able to see what is best for us instead what's best for me. Maybe finding out what's best for us is what's best for me, so that's another thing that kind of popped-up here. I think that goes some others places as well, certainly discrimination is very very powerful.

Woman: Is that a principle?

Man: Discrimination is the ability to make choices.

Woman: ... matter of interpretation you give, you give us a word whether or not it is principle period.

Man: We talk about we have discrimination as being more of a primary spiritual principles. It's not the discrimination I'm talking about in the discrimination clauses and so forth. A lot of religious groups use discrimination as one of the primary principles, it is one of the four forms of yoga by the way. One of the tenets of some of the Christian groups it certainly comes in to all region it is very old ---

Becky: Looking at this tradition has been very emotional for me lately but one of the things that was a little bit lighter when I was reading this was remembering how important to me when I was new that realization that my very life depended on what went on in N.A. When we were a little small it meant for the first time in my life I could ... and that my very life depended on it was a spiritual experience. It was an awakening and I still think that is so

Jack: That's a good phrase.

Danette: Greg just brought up this word discrimination which I don't care about the word but the issue of it being a principle a commonly accepted principle in or from any religious groups. That's something that I didn't think of when we were talking about the Preamble the use of at least a couple of different uses of the word principle and that there can be a difference between principle of action a principle of technology a principle of aerodynamic all those kind of things and the way that N.A. views spiritual principles. I think they are real different. That's something I would like to get back in the Preamble notes maybe that needs to be talked about more there. Back it up, put it down there.

TRADITIONS DISCUSSION

TRADITION TWO

3/09/90

One of the things here, people really say over and over again we do not have leaders. This is one of the misread traditions that we have and I think that it is real indicative of the attitude in N.A. towards any kind of anything that is perceive as authority. Even if we have given people the authority to do the job and I have just one thing to say, point out it doesn't say that we don't have leaders, it says we do have leaders they don't govern they serve but they are expected to lead. Leading and governing are two different things and I think those are really key points. The group conscience discussion depends on where you are, what part of the country or whatever it seems to be the interpretation of this and somehow trying not to set up rules again or definitions that restrict people but trying to figure out what the spiritual principles are that are operating that will help groups to know when they are

listening to the disease or God. I'm not sure how to do that, but to open this up for discussion so that it isn't such a controversy. It is a very controversial tradition. It's used a lot for separation for separating us from each other, it the we and them stuff that if it is a group conscience if it agrees with me if it's not it's something else. It wasn't informed it wasn't informed group conscience it's somebody else expressing themselves. I mean there's just a lot of that, there's a lot of controversy about that saying it was group conscience and using that group conscience as every time a group of people with ten minutes clean votes on something it's assumed that now become something that you can run the world by. It's amazing some of the decisions I've seen made that in the name of group conscience are defended when they are clearly bad decisions. Just all of that comes to mind with this.

Steve: I remember when I was in that frame of mind that it made perfect sense to me that this tradition by itself talked about leaders of the group. In my mind that was like the leader that lead the meeting. It was about categories of servants to the fellowship and that statement about leaders didn't really carry through to committees, boards and special workers. It's just talking about my group, there's this leader in front of the room and the statement was reinforcing that this leader didn't governe my N.A. group. So when we would talk about service people being leaders for the fellowship, it didn't fit in that discussion cause there's two sentences in that tradition. I've always had conflicting feelings about being a leader in what ever position I held. I always wonder if that sentence that talks about the N.A. group flows into the next sentence which talks about leaders, or does it go on to other categories of service to the fellowship. When people are saying the traditions are for the group, that one really talks about the group and nothing else. I'm not to clear on that. In fact the longer I'm around the less sure I am. I think other traditions speak to service positions and what they do.

Jack: I think this is where we come into talking about the principles embodied into the tradition and how it gets applied at area, regional whatever level is one of the ways that I've always looked at that. First of all I don't believe our leaders are necessarily elected, they may not even hold a position. I don't think because someone is elected that they automatically become a leader. The opportunity is there but it doesn't necessarily mean we end up filling it simply because we been elected to a position. The other side is theoretically somebody must see you as a leader to put you in that position. Whatever level of leadership we are in in reference to Narcotics Anonymous it should be done as a trusted servant. I see this as more a message I need to have if I see myself as a leader then perhaps as even necessary that the group have of me. This isn't what I need to have, the picture of myself if I accept the responsibility and if I accept that the premise that I am a leader of some kind responsible to a group whatever it be, whether it World Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous or my home group I need to be doing it with the

sense that what I am is a trusted servant and I am doing it to be of service and I need to be doing it in a way that's trust worthy and not try to run the show. That's where I see that sentence being most ... individual abuse of it, people who are in leadership.

Jack: So, it is more important for me I think to embody the principle of service. Danette and I spent last Sunday going over the Second Tradition. I think one of that things that I haven't heard discussed very much that we talked a little about in some of the input certainly attempted to address. I don't know if anything answered it, is the word may. May express himself, doesn't say that God is going to do that you can be certain of it. Just that he may express himself at our group conscience. I don't have the meter that can be used to determine whether or not in fact he did or didn't express himself in that group conscience. I think that is what we're all looking for is the meter and know immediately not a year later looking back at the results but to know immediately when it was God in fact that he did express himself.

Mitch: What is a trusted servant? What is group conscience? As far as just the people around the table expressing themselves when we come to that, is that a group conscience or do we conscience a tally system. What is certain? ... These are the questions that come up for me and depending on which side of the bed I woke up today I get different feelings on it different days and I see if I am flexible on it in terms of different days that I would imagine a lot of opinions on who to interpret this. It's like whether we take things literally or metaphorically. What is meant here? What is the idea that's behind all this? Have we been in position of representing various groups of people that we known from being GSR, being ASR, being RSR or having to be a messenger of something I don't feel in line with. So what is my responsibility there as a trust servant to deliver the message as it was given to me or to somehow be a trusted servant.

Bob: I think just from our last discussion I have set my concept of group purpose, ... used to be able to carry the message to the newcomer now I've expanded to promoting the common welfare. Which is our group purpose? It shows our common welfare carrying a message and the stay up service function, stay up our service committees. We need to talk a little about where our group purpose is. The ultimate authority that the God's expression, I think we can talk a little a bit about the principles of knowledge. To listen to somebody else's view point. You are listening, try to hear and understand what someone else has shared and what the meaning that has. We all understand our own position, but there's going to be spiritual principle that deals with understanding other people position. Where they are coming from. How they think that way? Why they think that way? and try to seek our common ground. Trying to seek that which we agree on rather than that which we don't agree on. But it is a honor I think of listening for it and

knowing what you hear. We talk about our leaders, there are a lot of different leadership styles and I think we need to talk a little about what are acceptable leadership styles for our fellowship. What separates leadership from governing. Leadership should bring to the forefront those spiritual principles that apply in that situation. So that all of us in the group can understand the wisdom for doing it a particular way. That will be my definition of what a leader should be. A leader should be able to bring forth the spiritual principles in a clear enough fashion that people understand that we can come together and get that unity. The other part that's often so hard for us is that leadership by example our role modeling. I want to talk about leadership and I think we need to really define what kind of leadership we are talking about. I think that's the kind of leadership is leadership by example, is what we talk about when I share our experience. If we are not sharing an experience then we are putting ourselves in everybody else's principle, we should lead by example. The other thing is we don't govern. We need to talk about in that specific section the difference between power and spirit as it relates to making a change. We're a spiritual fellowship and then we should be operating on spiritual principles rather than power plays. I think we need to devote a little time to talking about that. Jack used an example for us earlier today about ... I think what we have to realize is that most often newcomers learn by their mistakes as do our children. So, I think we need to address that, the newcomers, the new groups and people often wonder why their mistakes and that's okay. It's okay to make mistakes but we should also be learning from them. Jack's example what that does for the older member it's pretty much the same pattern. It gives the older members an opportunity to practice patience, tolerance and practice some spiritual principles that we know about and need the opportunity to practice. We been around long enough to hear about all of them but sometimes in our groups when we are relatively an old-timer in some of those groups I think we have to know when to back off a little bit so we don't end up dominating or feeding into the idea to be dependent to have somebody else do it. We have to be careful not to deny somebody the right to take personal responsibility and in that growth process I think we have to realize that people often come in to do positions and do things don't always do that as well as we would like them to do it. The other part of that is that the older members in the group need to point out clearly what they see as the pitfalls for a new group going down some of the roads that we've already been down. We can build credibility for the future so we can take our newcomers from making their own mistakes and learn to a point where they can accept wisdom to learn. They don't have to make their own if they can learn by mistakes of others. There's a transition period when we do that. The other part is, I don't know how we can do this I think we need to relate the age of the group to the group purpose. We don't expect young children to be able to except more responsibility than an adolescent or young adult. We need to talk about that, we need to tie that to how well that group fulfills it's group purpose. How

well it can function caring the message, fulfilling it's service commitments offering a wholesome environment for ... We need to talk about those things.

Stretch: I think Bob hit the group purpose pretty good I don't want to get redundant, I like that but I put forth the spiritual principle instead of ego principle and deliver the message. I think that's part of what this means, what I see it really is disturbing again. I believe you sit back and it goes away but the manipulation, politicing, ego, people who show up in meetings and business because they don't show up six weeks in a row but then they have a point they want to get across and they got to get their point whatever that it and they bring their friend because they not there is a vote that night, that's what needs to be addressed I think in this particular tradition. Instead of letting go and letting God they are there because they are going to try and manipulate the vote whatever that vote may be is really unimportant but they are going to do it because they feel they got to do it and that is part of we want to control situation. I think that is part of it. The "may" is interesting Jack, I think it says there is only but one ultimate authority. They said that already, he's there and this tradition doesn't say there may be an ultimate authority it says there is an ultimate authority. And it says a loving God as he may express himself in a group conscience, well the "may" doesn't mean that he may or may not. In this case the "may" means that he is going to do it as it happens. I think the "may" here is a different use of the word "may" as we would normally use it. Again it's interesting the way it's written because it doesn't presume that God may be expressing himself it says God is the ultimate authority. I think this thing needs to point out that people who come to these business meetings and the ad hoc committee meetings and the rest of the meetings that deal with service, that they are suppose to be there for service and for the spiritual purpose of being there and to render that service instead of trying to control the situation and to get their point of view as opposed to the point of view of everybody collectible. I think that this is the important point here is the collective point of view that comes out of listening and letting everybody express their opinion instead of being stifling opinion and somebody else deciding what the collective point of view is.

Greg: In the last couple of years I had some interesting changes in what I think this Second Traditions is about. There is a difference when I look at the Second Tradition as a whole from when I look at it's parts. I used to look at the parts of the Second Tradition, I used to break it up in like four phrases for our group purposes ... Why doesn't God express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants they do not govern, three parts. I use to look at those three parts almost separately. When I looked at them separately I still think that's about the way to look at them. I think there are some very powerful statements in those three separate. I think those are three separate very powerful statements. I get a different feel then

when I look at them all together. I was reading this tradition over, I just went oh wow, this is so simple. I don't think this tradition is about leadership or group conscience, I don't think it's about ultimate authority, I don't think it's about the group ... I think it is about membership. I think it is a statement about the unity of the group the collective group that's what is important. We don't have any ultimate authority, we don't have world authority God it ain't anyone of us or any of the members. We don't have any outside authority, the only authority we have ... God. All of us as members are equal. What about leaders? We got none in the first place and not only that they are our trusted servants they come within the group. So I begin to read the Second Tradition as a statement of the nature of participation in N.A. group membership. And how we are all part of this process of authority as a loving God as he express through our group conscience, of leadership when we serve or being leaders. We don't have special classes of members, we don't have to worry about somebody running away with the ball or being the authority figure in the group there is none just God... And to me that sheds a whole new light on the traditions. Oh man, I've been looking at the trees I didn't see the forest. I don't believe that for me that line of thinking has evolved as far as I would like it to evolve. I think there is lots more explanation personal to me and that line of thinking in the Second Tradition. But I think there's is a ... of truth in that I have been looking at the trees instead of the forest and that there is a forest to the Second Tradition and has to do with membership not leadership, not government. This tradition uses the word group ... noun as an adjective. I believe that the definition is different as a noun than an adjective. As an adjective it is kind of meaning collective, our group conscience our collective conscience. As a noun I think it's referring to a very special thing, I do not believe that it means any ... of addicts as a group, I believe it is clearly defined terms in Narcotics Anonymous. Meeting that happens at a regular time and place so on and so forth. One of the reasons I dislike the principles of service so much was in the first one there's this mixture of authority ... Just a direct contradiction what this tradition said and I'm a strong believer in that spiritual principles are never in conflict. I knew one of them was wrong, I didn't figure it was the traditions.

Man: the last word is a loving God. Although we may try to screw around with it, we can do this and we can do that, and we don't have to worry because ultimately there's a loving God ... We try to rule, we try to govern, create a committee, we can embezzle funds, we can hold conventions with the purpose for the money of an individual getting rich, do all sorts of things. But ultimately there's an authority and a loving God that is going to take care of that. To me this is also statement that of the ... affairs that governs our fellowship. Second Tradition is a statement of a motion that there is a God of our fellowship an ultimate authority for a group, for Narcotics Anonymous. Relationship that there is tie between the Second Step and the

Second Tradition now and that says the presence of a loving God. Restoration is understanding that God will take care of us. Group conscience, interesting word conscience literally not science, anti science. One of the problems we run into historically is trying apply scientific method to something that is by definition anti-science. that's why votes don't work and not an accurate expression for conscience. What I relate to group conscience today is when I come around you and get the drugs out of my system. I do Fourth Step, Fifth Step, steps I've started developing in conscience, the sense of right or wrong that I used to make my decision that I chose to guide for my behavior. We get together and we use our collective awareness and some right and wrong to make our decisions. One of the things I defined group conscience as collective understanding of awareness of, surrender to spiritual purposes of a new group is the bases of our decision making process. That's as close as I could come to defining the group conscience, a collective understanding of the awareness of surrender to and application of to spiritual principles. Conscience, spiritual principles things that always work. Morality of the group conscience sense of right and wrong. Conscience is something we tap into in order to make a decision. I don't think conscience is ever carried. I don't think conscience is tally. I don't think when a vote takes place at a group level or any other level it's a conscience. It's a vote, it's a consensus maybe but it is not a conscience, conscience is what we each individually and collectively reach into to touch and use in arriving at that decision. It's our spiritual sense of ... that part of us develops in our group thinking perhaps. Leadership, got to agree with you the concept that there is ... one of the things I would like to say people don't choose to be leaders. They are usually chosen by people. When we try to set ourselves up as leaders it never works. It never works, it's insane. The people who are our leaders are the people that we love. We look to them for experience, we look at them because they live by their conscience. We look at them because they are our role models. We look to them because of integrity. Our leaders are the people with spiritual integrity. Our trusted servants should be those with spiritual integrity. People we can trust to serve us and not serve anyone else. They are people we can trust to stand up for what they believe in. People we can trust to stand up for what we believe in. Leadership comes from within a group. I really like the Second Tradition it's really got a lot of meat to it.

Kim: I really enjoyed hearing the discussion on this. I agree totally that voting does not equal group conscience. I think that has caused a great deal of suffering in our fellowship and I believe that is true. I do want to make a point the Twelfth Traditions says anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our traditions. That humility, that being willing, that spiritual anonymity that we are all equal no matter who we are, that's very much strikes me when I'm thinking or when I've talked on these two traditions that it's a great equalizer, the great teacher there. My reading of a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience is that the "may" there is simply the

"manner in which" not questionable about whether he does or not. Now, when that might happen it might take a year but ultimately over time that if we stick around some of the so-called group consciences which are always votes some really negative stuff can happen out of it. Eventually over time it's like a self correcting kind of thing that if people are still coming around they are still working the steps that eventually love and acceptance and humility will start to shape that. It does sometimes take a long time. I think that some of that stuff like being the discussions in Albuquerque and the some of the things I have myself personally so much difficulty with on what is happening at the world level service is that I believe that decisions that government is happening without group conscience in some areas and that's accountability to which we get into later in terms of our service voice, but that's part of the problem. When this is an example when these traditions aren't really adhere to that it's divisive and that group conscience thing was really interesting to me I was reading about a physicist who is one of the top, his name is David and he is one of the top theoretical physicists in the world and he studied work with Einstein. He came up with this theory of instead of the building blocks of nature being matter or atoms it's relationships. The relationships are really what matters expressed that way and that out of these relationships if energy that group conscience happens and they did these things where this group of people would get together with no agenda for over a period of years meeting once or twice a month and just talk with no agenda. They wouldn't give themselves an agenda and then look back and see how a group conscience some kind of thread that none of them have been aware of during those discussion would happen and that process would have to do the things that came up without them thinking about it. Always had to do with loving, caring things for the earth, for the environment, for the people on ... When I read that I just went, N.A. did it again we already had it and something came up with a theory about it but that it really works and that rest tradition for me is about relationships, is about that relationship to each other and to be open to that cause out of that is where that group conscience that intuitive somehow, something that we can't name, we can't count and we can't weight or measure that happens. It's really an exciting thing.

Danette: Although I almost could get what you were saying about the forest for the trees I agree it's not quite there yet. I need to be a little more literal I think for now. A couple of things came to my mind. The word "may" like Jack said. It did come up in some of the stuff we were looking at and although it can just be a different interpretation of the use of the word. I don't know if I can quite accept that it doesn't have anything to do with will or won't except in that matter of time. That I think is something that might be important to address in this tradition a bit and that would be the patience. That kind of goes along with the fact that group conscience is not just a simple little thing, who is going to vote this way and that way and then it is taken care of, it's a process. Just like my recovery has been a process. It's a

process of being able to stop and listen and wait and have that trust, patience, knowledge, and faith that it is going to come about. I believe that those kind of things that are spiritual happenings do take time. Actually they may have happened immediately but in my limited perception I'm not going to see it until down the road and definitely upon dealing with a group of people it will take us just that much longer to come to understand what it is that happened. If a group conscience is not going to be defined in that glitter of that decision which I hope it's not. I think that also answers some questions about having trying to regulate or structure the matter in which a group conscience is decided upon like oh it's this many or that many or no you can't bring in your friends and you have to be registered member of the group to be apart of the group conscience. I think that kind of addresses some of those concerns that people will always want to know about. Leaders and trusted servants, are we going to accept that all trusted servants are elected. Elected to positions to serve. And if so then how does that alter the relationship between leaders and trusted servants. Don't some members naturally assume leadership roles it doesn't have anything to do with being elected. Describing to some extent leadership qualities and the difference between governing and leading ultimate as an ultimate authority meaning the final authority brings to my mind the fact that other things, people or whatever will be seen as authorities or will be accepted as decisions as final things before that ultimate action finally known. Which kind of goes back to that process that ultimately God will express himself in that group conscience and we'll know about it. But in the meantime, all these other things may have to happen. We may except all sorts of things as group conscience. At some point each of us said something about if this tradition or this particular principle in this tradition applies just to a group or individual or service structure. Another question comes up in mind is if we can keep thinking about do we have feelings that, how should that be addressed or do we need to be concerned about it. Is it going to come up in each tradition? Or are we going to find that there are certain tradition that do apply more to the individual then the group or service structure?

Man: Steve started off with a question. I think I came to a conclusion. I never thought it that way but I've always as far as for group only I've always applied it to all aspects of N.A. I suppose my answer to it was if I had a problem with Number Nine is it related to leadership or something would it be an asterisk see Number Two. I do think that it applies to all of them and what I got from Stretch was that group conscience is not necessarily the infinitive. I agreed a lot with Greg but there's a couple of things I disagreed with one was never have been able to accept that there is a God of N.A. I figured there's a God. I think he see over all of us whether we're in N.A. or not. Membership that this really kind of confused me, I see that tradition as, I suppose all of them, this one really applies as a protection from ourselves as it applies to our groups. Although we have some member who view that for

themselves, I don't know that it applies so much to the member as to the group. I may have just missed the point you were trying to make ... This drumming home of the one ultimate authority and that may in there. I think it is always there I don't know that we just don't always recognize it. I don't think I heard faith or if I did it didn't register. This is the same thing as trust. There's the faith that we have in our leaders and open-mindedness. The trust is that we have entrusted our direction to our leaders.

Woman: The key word for me was a loving God and if he, she or it, if they're there and there's a lot of hostility and manipulation and just insanity going through I'd have to question the group conscience taken ...

Tom: I've got a dictionary here. I looked up conscience and it said we're right on with the compulsion to do right. I agree with what Steve said about a group, I see us as a group here any recovery group or committee is a group and it's got to abide that group processing, conscience process. Greg had said what our leaders are, we definitely do have leaders, we made them our leaders. Basically leadership is a giving their faith in people and their example and they won our confidence. People I trust in they have won my confidence, they continue to do it now. Our group conscience, when I first look at group conscience I used to think this mysterious process that takes place I can be very mystical at times but I don't believe it is generally mysterious. It basically consists of information. We really can't have a group conscience with ... conclusions, make clear decisions without totally informed group conscience. I've seen people run groups where the majority of the group was moving in a direction which was absolutely convinced they were taking the right course. One person spoke out and gave a different perspective in the whole group and the whole group changed what they felt. It's because they have become informed in another aspect. I think the very fact that they were open showed that they were loving and ... that how to me God expresses himself, group conscience. Group purpose can be any particular issue in this basic group that could be the purpose. The group purpose is anonymity it could be an issue of money, the stuff we are doing that could be the groups purpose. Any particular issue that's going on at that particular time. Group purpose doesn't have a lot of authority of individuals.

Man: I also agree that there is not a God unique to our fellowship.

Greg: A couple of things, there is a relationship between this tradition and the Fourth Tradition also I think needs to be looked at. The group being related to the expression of a loving God within the conscience of the group is another thing which occurred to me. Spiritual Principles will prevail. The notion that the membership of Narcotics Anonymous can not understand something is a rejection of group conscience and therefore rejection of a loving God ...

TRADITIONS DISCUSSION TRADITION THREE

TAPE #6 - SIDE ONE

Woman: We had one question that was posed to us at the first trustee meeting of the year that we as a board never answered about tradition three. It was about meeting access and membership.

Kim: This is clearly a tradition that over the last few years... In New York, there was HIV positive meetings. There was always a special interest group meetings. I hope some of the discussion on this and what ends up in the book really provides a lot of loving guidance and openness to the fellowship about this because a lot of damage is done in the name of this one, too. At least I feel that's true.

Mitch: A little thing that happened in New York as far as woman's meeting on Staten Island wasn't recognized by the area service committee, so they had to travel to another place to be part of an area service committee. It was a sore spot for our service structure and they struggled for a while with it. The area where they were didn't want them on the meeting list and Brooklyn ????????? and Staten Island said well put them in Brooklyn on the meeting list. There was a lot of controversy all based on this tradition. So finally, the group decided to make a statement that they're open to anybody. It was a woman's special interest meeting and were open to anybody, like the tradition says. So men went to the meeting and it changed the meeting.

Mitch: It's still a meeting, but it's not a woman's meeting. The men got in their cars and loaded up and went to the business meeting and made a motion to change the format of the meeting.

Jack: This says this is the Twelve Traditions of N.A. so is this intended to mean that the only requirement for membership is a membership in N.A. or membership in a group. Based on some of the information that's gone out regarding group membership, it would seem that there might be some other things to consider ??? membership to groups. This brings up another question. In the beginning of the discussion, we pretty much were talking about how the tradition applies to the group and possibly, how does it apply to area and region. I would hope it doesn't apply to area and region and service structure. Even if we answer that question and the answer is membership in Narcotics Anonymous, there are people, I don't know how large a group of people, who don't interpret that as using drugs. It could be using anything and would allow them to have membership in Narcotics Anonymous, if they are not using their gambling, if they are not using

carbohydrates or sugar or caffeine or... and then again, did they have to use before. Do they have to be an addict? Do they have to identify as an addict? Or do they only have to have a desire to stop using.

Stretch: I posed the same question to myself in my mind. There's a whole discussion with reference to isolated groups. In addition to special interest groups, you've got the isolated groups that are considered meetings but not groups and aren't they members of N.A. while they may not be a member of a group. If someone goes to meetings and doesn't use and they're not a member of a group but still a member of N.A. I think that the broad use of the term, "membership"... I don't think it means membership of a group. I think it means membership in N.A. And using... I think there must be a definitive position taken by the committee at this time. If I used a drug, which I did at some time in my life and I stopped using, why aren't I a member of N.A. I went to a meeting once and it was a closed meeting and I said I'm a non-addict and the guy said well, uh, this is a closed meeting. I said, okay, I'll go. He said wait a minute. Do you not use drugs. I said yeah, I don't use drugs. He said okay, then you can stay. I'm telling you the way it was. Now this was early in the time that I started to going to N.A. meetings and I really didn't know the difference. That sounded like a good argument to me. He said do you have the desire to stop using. So I don't use, so that's good. I think this is also a good place to get into the discussion about the book. I think it's a wonderful opportunity for us to address the fact that alcohol is essentially a drug and that we recognize that it's a drug and therefore people who don't use drugs and use alcohol... Therefore are you really clean if you give up drugs and you drink. We say, in meetings, that they don't use alcohol and they don't use drugs. But this doesn't say that, because it doesn't say stop using what. Gee, Jack. I don't use caffeine. I guess I'm a member of N.A. But, I'm just saying... It needs to be said. It really needs to be addressed.

Stretch: This tradition is a forum for addressing those things whether it's your opinion or Steve's opinion or Bob's opinion. I think there needs to be a consensus on the committee. It needs to be set forth, whatever that opinion is. Those isolated group questions really bother me as a member of the Board of Trustees. I was reading the stuff that comes out. I get all the communications. People who are sitting in prisons or someplace where there's no access to groups, to service... I don't think we can say that they're not members. I think it really is an issue that can really be put to bed, and if this group does it, it's going to be put to bed. People are going to stop writing letters saying, are they groups, are they meetings or what. The issue has to be put to bed. This is the time to do it.

Woman: I think it's defined in our text. It talks about what N.A. is. It's a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem.

We're not seers. Granted we deal with addiction, but I would question someone that has a problem with food coming to N.A. N.A. is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. I think it's also defined in our literature in the beginning that alcohol is a drug. We must not be confused about this. My interpretation of stop using is stop using drugs. Once I stop using drugs, I can see my addiction manifested in other ways. I feel real strongly about that and I just needed to say that.

Greg: There are some people who would expand the concept to cover everything. I also don't like that approach but one of the things that jumps out at me about this is the juxtaposition about the requirement for membership and what constitutes membership. We say that we only require one thing of the people that join us and that's the desire to stop using. That doesn't mean that someone who has the desire to stop using is a member. Someone who's never heard of Narcotics Anonymous and has the desire to stop using isn't an N.A. member. There are lots of people with the desire to stop using. I had the desire to stop using hundreds of times before I ever heard of N.A. At least a hundred times. Well, at least twenty times. Well, a lot of times. I had the desire to stop using. I'd promise. I'd promise myself, I'm going to quit. This is enough. So just having the desire doesn't mean membership. I'm fine with the statement "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using." I like the statement of an open membership, open participation. Of inclusivity rather than exclusivity. It's a statement of philosophy that says we are fellowship if you have a problem like us. I agree with it. Drugs. There has to be some chemical use there before... We talk about a threefold disease. I think all aspects of the disease have to be present before someone is an addict qualified for membership in Narcotics Anonymous. Physical, mental and spiritual. Physical being the sensitivity to the drugs. The disease concept can come into this third tradition that way. That there is a physical aspect although that's not all there is. But what constitutes membership? The closest I can come to define N.A. membership...

Greg: ...I think an N.A. member is an addict who has chosen to recover in Narcotics Anonymous. We require the desire because without the desire they'll never get clean. The desire is the one thing that will... or the lack of the desire is the one thing that will break the back of any addict. If you haven't got it, sooner or later you're gone. ... "We come to this program for many reasons. Those of us to stay do so for the same reasons, to stop using and to stay clean." The person may not come with the desire to stop using, if they stick around they're going to develop that desire to stop using and to stay clean. That is the bottom line for us. Our experience has taught us that without that, recovery is impossible. Sooner or later, a person either comes with the desire or develops it. It's implicit in our first step. There's a

relationship here to our first step. The admission of powerlessness over the disease of addiction. The implication of a desire to stop using.

Not everyone who comes has stopped using. The whole thing of different categories of membership comes up, too. The use of medication comes up under this. And how we discriminate about different types of medication. There's a lot of '????' here. Talk about second or third class membership. People in institutions who do not have mobility. We discriminate against them and say you may not participate in decision making of N.A. because you are not mobile. We've got a ton of members in that condition. I don't know if it's a third or a quarter but it's a bunch. That whole discussion comes in here. That whole H&I discussion. That whole discussion of the use of medication. Is a person who has to take digitalis using? I take thyroid medication every day. Am I using? Do I have to change my clean date? What if that were lithium? What if that were thorazine?

... What if it were phenobarbital? And yeah, we all know they're really not using, but we don't want to involve them in N.A. All those issues come out in here. Let alone the special purpose issues. That battle has been fought since the '???... still no resolution. Any twelve step fellowship, no resolution. Meetings for specialized groups of people. Common interest meetings. I don't care what you call it. It's the same battle. It's been going on since the '??? No resolution. I don't know that we're going to resolve it. We need to acknowledge it. That brings out a point. I think all those things need to be looked at under this tradition.

Becky: There seems to be a common consensus in this room that it's membership in the fellowship. I think the only thing it brings up for me is why we aren't willing to say that. If there's a consensus, why aren't we willing to say there is.

Someone: Is there?

Becky: That's what I'm hearing from the people who've spoken. I think I have more questions than anything to say.

Hollie: I feel like this is the place to talk about the issues Greg brought up with the medication in recovery and meeting access and stuff like that because that is a big part of membership. If you can't make it to a meeting. What about all those loners that are out there. What about all those people that are in Iran. All those people that don't have any possibility of getting to a meeting and the only meeting they can make it to is a meeting through the mail, does that mean that they're not a member of Narcotics Anonymous because they can't get to a meeting, or are they still a member. Some people would dispute that. That if you can't make it into the rooms then you're not

a member. I have some real problems with that because I read those letters all day long. The issue, too, of medication because there's so many different things. I had people classify tranquilizers as minor and major and the minor tranquilizers are more mood altering than the major tranquilizers. What do we do about that sort of stuff. What about somebody that absolutely has to take something or they're going to go crazy. They're going to come into a meeting and threaten to kill somebody or bring a gun in and hold the whole group hostage because the group told them that they couldn't be a member if they took their medication. There's some real deep issues in there. This would be a good place to address those. I don't have any answers right now.

Steve Sigman: If someone did add the word "drugs" to the end of that tradition, would it change anything? Really? Stretch or Stone could still be a member if they wanted to be a member. It isn't threatening. It isn't like someone says, I want to stop using. ???? change N.A. You can't be powerless over an addiction if you haven't got one. You can hang around and be a member because you want to be a member. But there won't be anything there. So when Greg was talking, he said the reason we require a desire to stop using. I mean do we require it?

Greg: It says so. There's only one requirement for membership.

Steve: But who requires it. That's what I'm saying. Who judges whether if Stretch says, "I've been having a drink every Saturday night for the last twenty years and I have the desire to stop doing that so I'm a member of N.A."

I mean, who judges. If we require it, then who judges it. What I'm looking at is requirement and if you added drugs, would it really change anything? Would it really? I really think we get locked into that approach and I don't see where that effects the isolated groups thing anyway. Whether the people that are isolated making some decision on whether this means member of the fellowship or in addition to that member of a group or is it a group or not. I don't think that's the issue there. I think that groups have more requirements than a desire to stop using just by their nature. Some groups, you have to live around there or you can't be a member. Some groups, if it's a home group, you have to agree to something, to be a member of the home group. I think we take it as threatening and it isn't threatening. I think if we had the power to add drugs to the end of it, it really wouldn't change anything except a need to judge membership. Beyond being a member, there's other things that would always come into play, but someone deciding they're a member is... It's always going to happen.

Jack: In order to decide if they want to be a member, I don't think the tradition needs to be changed, but if the traditions are the traditions of

Narcotics Anonymous, you need to know what you're joining. And what you're joining is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We don't get into deciding whether drugs had become a major problem for them. That's them. But they need to know that they're joining Narcotics Anonymous which is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. You say you got a major problem with drugs and want to stop using. Welcome into the group. It's that simple. If we're going to run a make on people or anything, we're going to do... As I see it, it's that simple.

Someone: Group membership is available to anyone who has a desire to stop using. The question was brought up by Becky about... Should we say this is a consensus... Membership in the fellowship or membership in a group. I think it's both. I think that the principle is open membership. The principle lies in "you're a member when you say you are." It's the decision of the individual. So I would say group membership is available to anyone who has a desire to stop using. Another thing that goes in here that I didn't mention before is the rights and responsibilities of membership. Another point of development. We've looked at what constitutes membership. Now what are the responsibilities of membership? What are the rights of membership? I believe the right of membership in Narcotics Anonymous is to participate in the decisions of Narcotics Anonymous. I believe that a right of membership in Narcotics Anonymous is to be in an atmosphere which espouses the Twelve Steps and facilitates applying those principles to your life. I believe that one of the rights of membership is a right to be of service, at least the right to do some twelfth step work. To carry the message to the addict who still suffers, probably at the group level. I don't think that being Chairperson of the World Service Conference is a right of membership. But I think reaching out your hand to a newcomer at a meeting is a right of membership.

Someone: I've seen people take white chips that I wouldn't want to judge whether they're members or not. If they think that they're members and if they stop using drugs or whatever it is, they're a member. I'm sure that it's happened that people have judged, well you ain't a member. I'm sure that it did happen in the history of N.A. I think it recites the open door policy. I think a lot of things that were said, while they may not be solutions, they certainly need to be addressed. I think I heard a lot of good things here today. A lot of things that haven't been addressed. They've been under the table. They're in the open. And now that they're in the open I think they need to be put on the table and be addressed.

Someone: When you were talking before, Greg, you said do we acknowledge the problem or do we offer some solution. I think that's an issue we need to talk about at some time. Are we going to just say that this is a problem or... It may be acceptable for us. We haven't gotten a clear answer. The other

thing about the desire to stop using, the issues I see that cause problems are when a court all of a sudden sends a person to a meeting and they don't want to be there and you have more of them than you have of us and it gets really disruptive. So that might be an area that we want to talk about. Where people are forced to come to our meetings. How we want to address that. I think this tradition gives us an opportunity to talk about identification. The identification of an addict, and you said it Greg, who has a desire to recover in Narcotics Anonymous. I think we can make some pretty clear statements about the identification to recover in our fellowship. I don't think we can skirt that issue of special interest meetings. At some point we need to address it. I'm a person who supports that open policy about it. I think that there a lot of people who, before we had special interest groups, recovered in our rooms, the general room, without special interest. They were able to recover. I think that if somebody wants to attend a special interest group and there's no other meeting and if they have some ????, they should be able to do that. I think what happens is that, if we're talking about people who are trying to recover... again that identification process... to place themselves in groups where they hear things that relate to their own life space. Now we talked about it here. The newcomers, older recovering people. We ourselves are trying to seek out those groups that answer our own desires. I think when we start to close our membership because of special interest then I think we really end violating the traditions. I don't see any harm with letting groups identify themselves as whatever name that they choose that will be easily recognized as a particular lifestyle. But that anybody should be free to attend that meeting. My experience with some of that stuff is that every once in a while you get somebody that wants to be an asshole but they don't stay long, they don't disrupt the meeting for very long, unless there's some resistance. Then people make that an issue. But sometimes it doesn't happen. I think we need to make strong statements about prejudice. I think we need to make some real strong statements that it has no place in our rooms. The other side of that is that if we try to shift the focus back to spiritual principles as the purpose for being in the meeting, is to acquire the spiritual principles and learn how to live clean and live comfortably, then I hope we can address that. I think this is also a spot for medication to be discussed.

Mitch: When we were talking about the first tradition earlier, it was kind of similar to this discussion. In terms of meeting the needs of our recovery, at a certain stage to create a meeting to deal with issues after we stop using drugs. That's kind of an extension of the special interest and if we created a meeting like that and a whole bunch of newcomers pulled up in a car and they wanted to come into the meeting and talk about not being able to stop using drugs, would we get upset? Would they be entitled to participate in the meeting? What is our common welfare? Some people believe our common welfare deals with our sexual issues and whatever common needs they want

to get together and discuss so they have the right to do that. What is ??? It just flashed in my head... American Express card... Membership has its privileges. But I don't think it's privileges. I think of it in terms of responsibility. In terms of I have the right to stay after the meeting and participate in the business meeting. I have the right to participate in decisions of this group. Just by saying so. Nobody's going to determine for me if I meet those requirements. I'm going to determine for myself. And that's something that's...of the openness of this. We have these situations that arise when people come to our fellowship that somehow we determine they're not addicts. Or they realize it. Early in recovery we had a wife of a recovering addict who came to a meeting that had very little clean time around the table and we forced her to either say, my name is so and so and I'm an addict or you're outta here. That was what we did. We didn't know any other way to deal with that. So we said either you do it or you're outta here. So I wonder how many people are going to be ??? our doors to get recovery if we don't address the openness of this. There's been a situation in the last couple of years of somebody travelling around our fellowship and saying they were a recovering addict with twelve or thirteen years clean time and throwing out names of trustees and various people in world service and then gaining the confidence of people and he was a member of us. He said he was and people believed him. What happens when the situation came that he went around the fellowship taking money from people. So when we found out this was the person in our region, we had a big get together on what to do about it and half the people in the room said ??? let's get him. The other half of the people in the room said "no." It has nothing to do with that. We can't determine for him. In the area that he was in, he was P.I. chair and doing all this work. So we can deal with those things but what do we do? Do we close the doors? People are saying, no, you can't. There's a loving God that takes care of these things. Not us. These are the kind of things that come up in this tradition. You can take it and use it as a real weapon. These situations will occur. These will happen and they will be small amounts of what happens. Not going to be the overwhelming what happens. We need to say that's what happens. That's part of being open.

Tom: I remember about three or four years ago I was getting really bummed out that it seemed like for maybe thirty days there was a whole series of people that came to our meetings and they'd go through the treatment process and fill the rooms up and after about forty days of being out of treatment they'd all disappear. Round robin going... year in and year out. I was wondering what did we do wrong here. What message are we carrying? One night I was at this meeting and there were about a hundred people at the meeting and when they asked for anybody in their first thirty days, 90 percent of the room stood up. They went through that whole process of introducing themselves and there was a few other people there and I was looking at it and don't know why it is and I've never done it like this before

but when they opened the meeting up for discussion I said "How many people here are members of Narcotics Anonymous? Raise your hand." There was about twelve people out of a hundred that had their hand up quick. The rest were... And I said, the reason the rest of you don't put your hand up is you're not members. You're not a member till you say you are. Some of you said you are. You made a commitment to be members of this program." It was really neat. Shook up a lot of people at the time. They began to wonder, what am I doing here anyways. I come here and I share at these meetings and participate. Doesn't that make me a member? I guess not because I don't think I am. I'd love to see something like that in this tradition. It would shake people up. A lot of us kind of come in these doors because we're brought here for whatever reason and we never really do make a commitment. We're sent to a bunch of fellowships, so we think we're a member of all these fellowships. And no one ever really chooses whether they belong to one of them or not. Something we were saying about someone being a member and still be using, or they're on medication or whatever. Years ago, a newcomer was a real commodity. ????? There's somebody here. Even if they were still using. It really didn't make much difference. Just keep coming back. You can talk. Sure, go ahead and talk. You wanna be secretary? or secretary and treasurer. A lot of these people are. ???? they made it. Because they were welcome. Always they were welcome. We kinda got big and ??? closeness and openness. But it's that same spirit. Anybody who wants to show up in our rooms is welcome here. If they don't belong here, they'll find that out themselves, eventually. The thing about the special interest thing... Regardless of what anybody says, they're going to exist anyways. Whether they're sanctioned by whatever sanction they're supposed to get they're going to exist, man. They've been here as long as I can remember. I think it's really kind of sad that we can't just let that go. ???????? They're going to exist and they'll continue to come up in all different kinds of forms and if they're really good they'll work and stay alive and if they don't, they won't. It's certainly not destroying Narcotics Anonymous. What destroys Narcotics Anonymous more than anything, is us telling people you can't do this. You can't have this meeting. You aren't part of N.A. You can't be a part of us. That hurts us more than anything. The thing that Greg was talking about, the desire to stop using. I remember looking at this tradition once and thinking that's the key to this whole thing. That desire. It's a gift. It's a gift I could never get before. I wanted to want to want to not use. But I never, in my heart of hearts, wanted to not use. And when I got it, I couldn't believe I had it. I think if we took the emphasis off some of this other stuff and get back to what this thing is all about, this gift that we have, what it really is. ??? paranoia about ??? membership.

Woman: The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. When I came in...I had never looked at it like that, but it is a gift to want to stop and to have that desire. I've done so much changing over the past three

or four years with this special interest stuff. I come from an area that was very purist oriented. I shudder to think how many people we scared out the door because they said a certain thing or they... I feel very poorly about that but I've changed too and I'm in an area now that has got so much special interest that... You have gay, you have black, you have white, you just... Yeah, really it's amazing. It blows me away. I've become very open-minded with it. I'm an addict. I'm an addict who happens to be a woman. When I was nursing I was an addict who also happened to be a nurse and in that profession, they don't call you addicts. They call you impaired. It's like, gee whiz. Call me like I am. I'm an addict. Today I guess I have that choice. If I feel a special interest meeting that I don't want to go to, I don't have to it. There are other meetings that meet my needs which is learning how to live clean. I also have something else that I heard when I got to New York. N.A. clean time. What is N.A. clean time. A lot of the guidelines state to have a working knowledge of the steps and traditions. It doesn't say anything about N.A. clean time. That's something that is really addressed, how much N.A. clean time. When I first came into the rooms, I went ????? Does this mean those years of clean time don't count? I feel that maybe we could look at that. I don't know if you even have that here or if it's just an oddity of New York.

Man: This is one of my steps here, this tradition. I haven't read it in a long time, but one of the best things in our *Basic Text* is on the third tradition and I don't even remember what it says but I just recall... It's been a while. I better crack my book here. I guess without desire you wouldn't have that first ???, meeting. You wouldn't have had A.A. We wouldn't have had this. It's like the first thing in all of our lives, even if we got here before we got the desire. It is what makes everything else possible. The using, what you were talking about, Steve... I'm not even sure what A.A.'s third tradition says but it probably says something about drinking and I'm sure they excluded water from that. I think the vernacular has been known for a long time and I believe it always will be.

Man: What happens at a meeting when a non-addict arrives and/or starts talking... I'm sure if the person, and in fact it's happened... A doctor was invited to come to a meeting and talk to us about how he could take care of all our ills by putting us to sleep. There was a little bit of argument there and half the group left. Then there's another situation that happened more recently where a girl started talking halfway through the meeting and it was obvious that it was a human being that was desperate. She was not an addict and it was obvious right away. She was the wife of an addict and everybody started to look around at each other like what do we do? It became very obvious. We let this girl blow because she was hurting and she needed to. There was nothing else to do and of course, afterwards, we explained that to her and she got more support after that meeting than most

newcomers; because there were no newcomers. I don't know if she's still around but she really got some help there. That's how we dealt with it on a couple of different situations. I was prejudiced against... When I first came, I wore a suit to my very first meeting and some people got right in my face. They figured I was wearing Florsheims and had a suit on, that I didn't belong there, that I hadn't used enough or something. It really was, I think a long time ago it was Junkies Anonymous. So that just encompasses all kinds of prejudice. And the requirement is a desire to stop using. The requirement isn't abstinence or attendance. It's just a desire to stop using. That's why we keep welcoming people who are chronic slippers. Hopefully, we welcome them in a different way so that we don't give the message to the brand-newcomer that that's what it's all about and it's hopefully a continuous recovery and abstinence. The special purposes, whatever they're called, the people in prisons, I think they're members too. And I think they're having N.A. meetings. I didn't feel that when I first heard it, but I think they're having N.A. meetings, regardless of what we think, because they're adhering to their society's rules and their society says that nobody from the outside can come in here you can't go to the meeting because you didn't do your job today. I think that they're abiding by their society. As far as how they participate at an area level or some other level, there's an answer for that. I think we could probably address that fairly easily. I think if we deal with that issue in this tradition, we should do it in a very generic way and if we needed to go further, we could address it in a pamphlet.

Kim: Just to go along with... I believe it's a desire to stop using drugs and I don't really think... We talk about this issue as though if we, I agree with Steve, if we don't do anything about it we're going to be inundated with people with food or eating disorders or something. And the truth is that people come in, who I've thought they're not an addict, they don't belong here and sometimes it turned out that I was wrong and sometimes they just move on. My desire to create a police state doesn't seem to be necessary for it to be okay. Do I disagree with [adding drugs]. The membership thing, I really believe it's a membership in Narcotics Anonymous and as a fellowship and that those groups, there's so much about this stuff like home groups happen, where you can only have one home group. I mean, pardon me, I'll have twenty-five if I want. Talk about rules. The people who have those home groups and are the most militant about it are also the ones that are probably going to tell me that my home group shouldn't be a gay meeting. So it's kind of interesting how being rigid anywhere, I mean, it's just all over the place. I don't believe it does mean membership in groups. Membership in Narcotics Anonymous. Narcotics Anonymous has groups that hold meetings. It has people in prisons that couldn't qualify for some of the definitions that an N.A. group has to be. The truth is that people can't cross the borders in between countries and that happens in the fellowship over in Hawaii. The Japanese got sent back because of Visa problems. I have a friend now in Montreal who

can't get in. Does that mean all the meetings in the United States aren't N.A. meetings because they can't get to them. It gets ridiculous. So the membership to me means membership in Narcotics Anonymous. I think participation in groups... We might want to consider moving away from talking about membership in groups and talk about participation in groups. If groups want to have requirements for how you participate, maybe that's up to them in terms of the business that they do, but membership in Narcotics Anonymous is just very simple to me. It's a desire to stop using. It doesn't necessarily mean you're clean. The stuff that I think causes the most real danger around things like the medication stuff, where we're telling... I get people so frequently who ask me... I'm not a doctor. I don't know what these people should be on. I'm having to take medications now that definitely have affected my mood and hormones because when I wasn't on them I was psychotic. I was suicidal and nuts because my body was out of balance. Does that mean because I'm on estrogen and I'm now in balance and I'm feeling much more sane that I'm not clean? Sometimes the arrogance that we have around these issues is just appalling to me because it's very hurtful to me and I really think that in this book we need to make very clear that this is not something that we dictate about. If somebody is coming to meetings and they are on Librium and their doctor tells them, if you get off Librium, you're going to kill your kids and they have a desire to stop using drugs and they're doing the best they can I'm not going to tell them they're not a member. I'm not going to tell them they can't talk. I don't think I'm qualified to do that. There's a young woman I'm sponsoring who's in a psych ward now in a hospital over there and I don't know, I can't determine whether this woman will ever be able to live without some kind of medications because she is mentally ill at this point. She may get over it, she may improve but what I'm going to say, you know she wants to be clean so much. She took it so seriously that she wants to be clean so much. Well, she was clean, folks. She didn't take anything and she had a serious near death suicide attempt, but she was clean up until the night she did that. She couldn't handle what was going on. Now I'm not going to take that responsibility on. But like you, we get more gentle about it as we recover and I think that's what we need to share in this book. That loving acceptance, that open door policy. I remember hearing this story and I remember crying when I heard about it. There was a man in A.A. who was, in my understanding the way I heard the story, there was a man who was a homosexual and that there was all this fear about what he was going to reflect on our groups and what will people think of A.A. because there's this very flamboyant gay man who wants to be a member and it's going to impact A.A. as a whole in our community here and what those people did was they asked themselves what, and for them they were old-time Christians, and they asked themselves what Christ would have done and there was no question. When they asked themselves what God would have done...

Kim: The answer to them was that of course he can be here. A loving God, if I stop and ask myself what would a loving God do here it usually simplifies it tremendously. ???? that woman sit there and be hysterical? No. A loving God would not say get the hell out of here, go die. It just wouldn't happen. And I don't think we usually need to control this all this much. To try in this document that we're going to do, to try to give people the courage to trust that thing that all will be well if we really don't try to control it. Really, all will be okay. We don't have to protect ourselves from all this.

Danette: Well, I was going to say that I thought we were probably making this all too complicated. I didn't know if that's because I was getting tired or really out of touch, but I think what Kim said made a point and if we can get some of that across, that's excellent. No, I don't think adding the word "drugs" is going to do anything. I don't even know if this pertains to isolated groups and all that. I'm not sure...meeting access...particularly what Hollie was asking for...I don't think this would answer that question. I won't even say anything more about the medication thing. I will make a strong point that I agree with what Stretch said at the beginning of all this that, yeah, let's get clear on this and make a statement that it applies generally to the fellowship or that it applies just to groups and are we... There are groups that add requirements. I don't know exactly how we want to...if that needs to be addressed at all, I'm real spaced. I know I'm not making a whole lot of sense here. My basic feeling about this tradition is that it really is to point out that there are no other requirements. It's not like that we're trying to say when the person... It's only coming from this side. It's not coming from their side. It's on them. It's on them and their recovery and their higher power and their sponsor. It's just that for our purposes as a fellowship, it's saying the absolute least, the minimum. It's almost like we didn't want to say anything but this was one thing that was really going to be important. And anything else is going to get worked out. I think the example that Tom used did that so wonderfully. It's like the people, the individuals themselves are going to make that decision and that choice about they are members and what that means to them. It might be nice to try to discuss some of our experiences and feelings about rights and responsibilities, although I don't like those terms, but what comes with being a member. If people who have some information about, that there is a decision that gets made there. This is what's a part of that decision. I think that would have been real helpful for me, not only in this tradition but in helping enhance my understanding and my ability to expand my loving attitude toward different kinds of special interest groups. I go back and forth with that still, too. My own personal feelings about that. But also, in the third step. It sure would have been nice if there had been something there about rights and responsibilities that come along with that decision, so I don't see that it would do any harm to include some of that here. That's it.

Jack: The thing that occurs to me where I think sometimes we get hung up with the ideas that membership to a group or is it membership in Narcotics Anonymous is where we confuse group and meeting is where I think that becomes a confusing issue to me. In the third tradition, I see it applying to Narcotics Anonymous ?????????????? other than just the desire to stop using. I don't think I can... I'll be in Florida in a few weeks. If I go to a group meeting and say I want to be a member, they're going to ask me don't you live in California. And they may not want to provide me access and membership to the group. I don't particularly think they should. But the group's meetings, the N.A. meetings, that are held, my membership gets me into. You don't even need to be a member to attend the meeting when it comes down to it. You don't. I mean I've never heard anybody say "do you have a desire to stop using and if you don't you have to leave." This is for addicts only, not for members only, is the only requirement for even closed meetings, that have a requirement of attendance. It's for addicts, not for members. You do not have to be a member to attend an N.A. meeting. A closed meeting you have to be an addict. That's it. You don't even have to have a desire to stop using. One of things we touched on would be rights of membership but I think it would be beneficial to talk about responsibility of membership. Because I think there's a responsibility that goes along with membership. We talked about some of those but I don't know if we quite said responsibility of membership. That's about it.

Someone: Is there a stated principle in this tradition.

Someone else: We talk about openness. One of the things that occurred to me while we were going is kind of like a parting shot that we don't have to worry about the people who are here with other intents because they'll either change or the disease will get them.

Danette: What?!?

Jack: We don't have to worry but there's been some concern about what if we publicize this openness, as though it was a secret first of all. I heard some discussion about what was going to happen by really going out there and letting people know that nobody's going to scrutinize this but the reality is that it will be scrutinized. It will be scrutinized as people get involved in a meeting or a group and it becomes... The only way somebody would have to lie... If the rightful place for them theoretically were O.A. and they came into an N.A. meeting, what are they going to say? "Yeah, I have a desire to stop using." How long could they stay and work this program and continue to be dishonest. So that will all take care of itself.

Someone: This tradition is one of the traditions in particular that really protects the individual. It's for the individual protection of the member. ??? real clear about this one.

Jack: It's also a group... I think it's a group... an individual member or a fellowship protection also. I don't have to get into judging you. I do not have to get into deciding whether or not you're appropriate for membership. Which relieves me and makes me feel a lot better that I don't get into doing that.

TRADITION FOUR

Male: Allows the greatest latitude for groups to decide and for the decision making to occur in the group. To allow that group to determine where it's at in its own spiritual development, rather than adhere to form and routine. Autonomy allows for personalization and the answering of present needs. That helps people become involved, become a part of the decision making process, that it's not a spectator sport that requires involvement. This protects us from cult-like behavior, allows for freedom of expression. What affects N.A. as whole, if we can keep the focus on the 12 x 12 of N.A., that's where our focus should be and not to set up guidelines (don't bring outside materials in), Encourage focus on 12x12 and the principles embodied in them, in applying those principles in our lives and to how our meeting functions. Anything that restricts attendance, I don't think you can restrict attendance, if you restrict attendance I think that affects N.A. as a whole. If our real focus is on the 12x12 then anybody should be able to attend any meeting. We should focus on that. One other thing is that we lose our credibility in new areas, when one meeting starts, then 8, then none. When we publish our meetings they need to be there. We lose our credibility when we start and stop meetings. When we start a new meeting we need to make sure we are going to support it, starting and stopping meetings affects N.A. as a whole. When a newcomer walks in the door, each meeting should have a common bond. They should know they are welcome. To not do that affects us as a whole. People write us off as a whole fellowship because of one meeting. We should write that in some how.

Kim: This reminds me of my own recovery, that I am given the sometime terrible burden of free choice. To make all the mistakes there are to make. NA is saying that they are that trusting of their groups. There is a tremendous responsibility in this tradition. Whether the responsibility is the outcome of practicing the principle..... Responsibility of choice that carries with it being informed about what the other Ts mean, about what it means to affect N.A. as a whole. Of the discernment of thinking things through, integrity of the group, the self determination that carries with it all the

possibilities. We are in a rut, there is a lot more that could be being done, if we were willing to look at the possibilities. This is meant to allow for the diversity of recovery. The disease is repetitive. Recovery is a potential for diversity, open the possibilities of not doing it the same. What if a new meeting were very different? I get uncomfortable with change with not following the rut. My willingness to see the possibilities is really limited by my fears. I think this 'T' has a lot to do with that, a richness and awful responsibility. It is frightening to have that much responsibility. This is saying there isn't much of a wrong way to do it. If the group searches itself for answers to a few questions. Will this affect others?

Greg: This is one of the traditions that runs through all of them. Either autonomy or that which affects NA as a whole. There are 2 main ways we use this in here. Creative freedom, tie that to "everything that occurs in NA service should be motivated by the desire to better carry the message to the addict who still suffers". I think that creative aspect is that each group is granted the right and responsibility to find creative ways to fulfill their primary purpose. Format, activities, sponsoring H&I meetings, all those aspects of creative freedom. Within some limitations. Also in here is the idea of absolute autonomy vs. limited autonomy. Limited autonomy, as being within a set of boundaries. Like painting within a school of painting. Each painting is a creation unto itself, while all part are of same school. Another point is security. Because each group is a unit it is less vulnerable to outside influences. One group gets in trouble it shouldn't affect other groups. Each group stands or falls on its own merit. That protective aspect of autonomy is real important. There is a tie between autonomy and self support. One of the primary reasons is to maintain freedom from outside entanglements. That whole set of things is promise of this 'T's security of the group. As long as there are N.A. members practicing this way of life N.A. will be alive and well.

Stretch: I have a problem reading Tradition 4 and using it as means to discuss the N.A. member. I think Tradition 5 gives you the whole spectrum of carrying the message. Tradition 4 seems to be about the relationship of group to group and group to service structure. Tradition 4 gives you the ability to discuss the group relationship into the Service Structure. I hear about the problem of clubhouses. Clubhouse where they can have meetings and they become the daddy having various groups. That is a problem that hasn't been discussed and this 'T' gives you the opportunity to discuss that in a positive way. This is not a violation of Traditions but something that might be looked at with care and warning, as it could affect the whole of N.A. Autonomy also allows us to revisit the special interest group. Meeting for old timers could happen, part of discussion is why they exist and why they can exist. I don't see any intent for discussion of individual members. It is up to

each group in different parts of world to follow the Traditions and remain recognizable as N.A.

Mitch: The key is communication, and placing conditions on autonomy. How do I know when it affects N.A.? My group has to be in communication. How else do I know what affects N.A. if I am not in touch with the other groups? First half of this Tradition being used as groups doing just what they want to (example). Discussion had them go back to group with new perspective of other groups. It's not like being told what to do but communication that comes with involvement with service structure. Freedom of choice but with that freedom, if you don't communicate we have a way to do that. If you don't fulfill that, you don't know the limits of your autonomy.

Tom: Self determination describes autonomy. Strength in N.A. is in the groups, the weakness is there too. The challenge is to have every group attract members. A meeting is just a meeting and a group is where there is effort to present a message and reaching out. There is latitude to creative freedom, each group needs to set and understand its own limitations and boundaries, in so far as seeing itself as part of the whole. Most groups have a sense of what it is to be part of. It intermingles with 5 and 10. Principles are involved. As a group there are certain things we cannot do.

Kim: Include that emphasis on the strength of the group. This tradition challenges groups to be self-supporting, responsible, reaching out to the addict. That kind of group adds to my recovery much more than some less involved groups.

XXXX: There are two types of meetings, open and closed, reinforce that in the meeting. If closed, it is for addicts only or for those who think they have a problem. If people don't feel safe that can affect N.A. as a whole. It is real important that the group carries that out. Working within a larger structure, like the group learns to work within a larger structure by working within itself. Same as me learning to work with me, the group running its own business meeting as well as the area and regional, important that we have that communication and feel a part of. 4th Tradition parallel to 4th Step, group inventory, look at our own behavior and does this affect N.A. as a whole.

Steve: Need to define and address the spirit of recovery. N.A. spirit is the common bond we find in all our meetings. It is recognizable as an N.A. meeting. That should depend on larger service body to which the group belongs, don't believe in policing, if other groups in your area don't recognize you as N.A., that's a problem. Address what to do about that problem, people not wanting to include a meeting on a meeting list.

XXXX: Unity and anonymity or people walk away. Wherever we get clean is the best recovery in the world, anything else is not as good. Certain home groups have the attitude that they are the only real N.A. This autonomy turns into arrogance. Steer away from that. If there is a warning in this Tradition that might be one of them.

Greg: Self sufficiency (each group sufficient unto itself), integrity, autonomous part of the greater whole. Freedom for the group with autonomy being a source of greater freedom.

Donna: Ability to contribute something that doesn't get handed down from a greater source. That within that meeting the potential is there. Compliments anonymity so well.

Becky: The attitude that the service structure should have about the group. Not something handed down from above.

Greg: Defines group like step defines the member. Letting go of the I and becoming a part of, but still being an individual. Not being different. Not being isolated.

Jack: Warning against isolation. We as individuals need to be reminded of this warning. The idea that we need to be aware of the fact that we are a part of the greater whole. That is one of the things lacking in California. Not so much in the newer groups, but in the older groups. Until I got involved in World service, I didn't begin to get the idea it wasn't just the meeting I go to, it is bigger than just my groups. That's partly because that was it for a long time. I have seen where that mind set is still there, that's dangerous. Trying to keep us abreast of that. Need to take a look at what we are doing. It could affect other groups in my area and we need to take a look at that.

Tom: Special interest groups. We, as service bodies, need to address how we create this isolation ourselves. The special interest groups perpetuate the isolation stuff, not being a part of because the service body has certain feelings about that.

Mitch: If it is the responsibility of the groups to be a part of the service structure, then the areas take up this position and use it in terms of the area autonomy. Doing just what he's saying creates the isolation of the group within an area. It becomes a two way street in the service structure as to whether they are playing a role in the isolation of a group.

Jack: Does the 3rd Tradition define what it take for a group to be a member of an area? Not the desire to stop using. Is following the 12x12 good enough

to be part of. One of the things I thought of is how to put this in writing so it will fix the problem. It is real clear to see that it is out of line to do that. The book is not intended to fix problems, but to provide information, interpret it in a spiritual, positive, loving manner. I want to put it down in a way that it will fix the problem. Think about how we can lay this out to provide everyone with (keep in mind non-US communities) enough information for them to interpret to use to solve problems. All we can do is try to keep it simple. Some will make mistakes, fall and pick themselves up

Steve: Is this the Tradition that will protect an area from the actions of a group? Do we need that protection?

Greg: My initial reaction is that the area doesn't have autonomy from one of it's member groups.

Steve: What does a group do with a member who is out of line?

Greg: An area is an assemblage of the representatives of the groups within an area. Literally made up of representatives from groups within the area.

Donna: Contingent on the existence of each and every group?

Greg: Of groups to be members of the area. Without groups there is no area.

Mitch: What right does the area have to determine entrance into the area for groups? That's not what this is for.

Greg: Why not?

Danette: I am even more confused. Why are we talking about this? Are we going to try to address this in this chapter? Is this a question we need to get clear about? Does each chapter have only one focus? Towards the group?

Donna: Hard to take it out of that context when we talk about autonomy of the group, except as it affects N.A. as whole. The need to have that interrelationship with the area svc committee.

Greg: Tradition 9 only exists in direct responsibility to the groups. Limited autonomy.

Danette: Is that something we want to express? That this can be applied to area and regional service?

Greg: Literal application vs. principle of application. The idea of self sufficiency and being free from outside entanglements, all those can be

applied to the area. As far as the members within the area, I don't think you can take it both ways.

Kim: Talking about the service structure should be under Tradition 9. It can't enter discussion here, it isn't clear.

Greg: Juxtaposition of unity and autonomy. That's a weekend worth of discussion.

TRADITION FIVE

(TAPE #8 -- SIDE #1)

Tom: Before we get started on this, this is something that we discussed a few years ago. I don't know how it was ever really resolved. I think it's something today that really needs to be looked at. In the Fifth Tradition there was a word change from A.A.'s original wording of this tradition.

Someone: There were many changes from the original..

Tom: But one very important one is "each group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." The original version and even the original version of one of our very early N.A. was to "carry it's message to the addict who still suffers." It wasn't too long ago that I had a discussion with somebody else about that word. The, it's. What is the message and what is each group's message? Does each group have it's message or is there the message in each group? I think it makes a big difference.

Donna: What I perceive and it would just be my perception in the distinction between the two; the message and the message of N.A. as a whole, independent of the autonomy of the group and all that that is attached to, as opposed to the group's message which might be a little different despite the fact that it may be carrying the message of Narcotics Anonymous. It's a sort of idiosyncratic way that groups develop and the personalities of the group can be reflected in it's message rather than the message of Narcotics Anonymous. I like the distinction and think it was a wise change.

Male: I kinda like it too. I think that I would be afraid of it's. It's has to refer back to the group. The group carries it's message. The group then decides what the message is and the group promulgates it's own message. I think the message is something that the committee now has a chance to expand upon. The thing that I like about number five is the word "carry." To carry connotes action and it makes the group something more than

passive. Observation of groups has always been that they're passive. They have a meeting and they're passive, so unless maybe there's an inter-relationship at some point where a group has H&I and a group has P.I.. Maybe that's part of the service structure that I'm not aware of. Maybe there are groups that have their own H&I committee and their own P.I. committee. I see the "carry" meaning that they put it out there and maybe that refers to the fact that at some point in time, the groups had their own...I don't know if they do today. I don't know if that exists somewhere. The word "to carry" is not passive. It's a very active word. Also, I believe a lot of people read this "each group has but one primary purpose;" they seem to think that means only. I think there has to be some very strong distinction between the primary only and then going to other purposes, again not to the individual, and I see four and five as being the thing that identifies the group situation and I'd like to, and again I don't want to say what it is, but I think there has to be a strong distinction that primary doesn't become only and that the message needs to be identified as strength, hope, recovery, all the things that everybody knows is there.

Steve Sigman: I remember last time you discussed that in the letter that went to Hawaii. But a while back I was reading what Bill wrote about this tradition in the Forties he said in one of his articles, there were other words before that. It said "... the primary spiritual aim of A.A. That of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers alcoholism." The clear meaning was that for A.A., each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message ... "It's" meaning A.A.'s message.

Male: One of the things I was going to say about that and Tom's asked me to look back at some of the archival stuff and find some stuff printed ..., see I'm not familiar with. "The" message is much more consistent with the principle of anonymity than personalities. Each group should not have its own personality and should have its own message in addition to the message of N.A. And I believe that the twelfth tradition implies that. One of the other things on this ... are the purposes. The other purposes of the N.A. groups other than to carry the message. There is the social purpose. There is the informational purpose. There is the therapeutic purpose. There is the mutual support purpose. There are a bunch of purposes to go along with this primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. I've really never seen those explored very much. If there is a primary purpose, it doesn't say the only purpose. Primary purpose implies other purposes. ... and I look to see why do I go to meetings. I go to meetings for personal growth. I go to meetings for social... I go to meetings for to get information. I go to meetings to express and explore myself. I go to meetings to get support. I go to meetings to have the opportunity to reach out to others. I go to meetings as part of my commitment. Fulfillment of my commitment to myself and my higher power. I go to meetings for a lot of reasons. I also go

meetings as a sense of identity. I think those kinds of discussions should come up here. Why people go to meetings.

Jack: Before I call on the next person, let me throw out something that I've never heard discussed which is certainly part of this definition of the addict who still suffers. I know what the popular definition is, but I don't know that I agree with that.

Male: ... but somebody with twenty years that's depressed and still suffering in the sense that there's many definitions. I've heard the opposite ... if you have 90 days, you've got enough of the message, you better start giving it out. You're not the addict who is still suffering anymore in that sense. Regarding what the message is, I took a survey about what they thought the message was and it's amazingly diverse. You know, you ask people what they think the message is and they come up with all kinds of different things. I don't know if we want to be in the place of or spelling out something that says this is... being specific, that's the issue. I don't know if the more time you have, the more you agree about what the message is and that's it.

Another male: I just want to pick up on that theme of what, the purpose is of a group to exist. That there is a reason for us and that that reason should denote that we have some tasks to accomplish as a group and that that requires a responsibility to share that experience, strength and hope. Jack just mentioned it, who is the addict who still suffers. All of us suffer from time to time. I think we need to make a real strong statement about that. That just because you have some time in this fellowship does not mean that you're not going to end up with your guts hanging out. But that the group has a responsibility then, to the person who suffers, to offer that strength, that hope, that encouragement. That's really the embodiment of this tradition, is that when any of us are suffering for whatever the reason, whatever the amount of time, that the group that we belong to has a responsibility to carry the message, because sometimes we get deaf to the message, when we've got so much sh-t going on in our own head, we can't even get to a message that we know somewhere is there. We need to have that carried to us from the outside and it's not just a message for the newcomer and I think if there's anything I'm going to walk away from this weekend from the sharing is that focus. our primary purpose is to carry the message and I always had that in my own mind focused strictly on the newcomer rather than the addict who still suffers,

Mitch: I agree with this as a great opportunity to address the still suffering addict as not just being the newcomer. We had this discussion earlier about new groups not forming to address other issues related to our addiction. This is a great opportunity to address that issue, to be for everybody, not just for the newcomer, to show an example, how it relates to somebody using that

just walks in the door. To explain it in terms of addicts who have clean time, they might have issues that need to be dealt with, and are suffering behind. Also the relationship between this tradition and the twelfth step. You might want to put that in here somewhere. In terms that, it's the only place that found in reference to the message. When I read this it was the same thing, the message. Are we going to say what the message is. The twelfth step says having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message... That's the only place I've found reference to the message. So what is the message. Is the message a spiritual awakening? Is that something we want to get into here, in terms of is that our primary purpose?

Nancy: Well, everybody said it. I wanted to be the first. Many times I go to a meeting and I am the addict who still suffers. I'm suffering and I think it's the group's purpose to... and I think we can do that by our 4th tradition... we are carrying the message of recovery to the newcomer and the oldtimer, The message I always heard was freedom from that addiction. If I don't pick up, I don't get high. It's pretty simple and I try to keep it real simple. If we don't pick up we don't get high and I think that's the message I've always gotten is that I can be free from the chain of active addiction.

Jack: One of the ways that I've been looking at that part of the addict who still suffers is that this is a program for people who suffer from the disease of addiction, and we don't get cured from the disease of addiction. We always continue to at least be addicts and perhaps everyone that's in the meeting is in some sense still suffering from the disease of addiction, even if our guts aren't hanging out and even if we are in a good place. If I'm in a good place I still want the message carried to me. I still want to grow. I still want to learn. I want to be able to give and do all the things that we do in that process but I tend to believe that we apply definitions to the term "addict who still suffers" that are exclusive and not inclusive. That doesn't seem to be what the message of Narcotics Anonymous is all about. It doesn't seem that that's what the traditions are intended to do, yet that's the definition the newcomer is the addict who still suffers. If there is a broader definition, then it's anyone who isn't a newcomer any longer but is in pain or struggling, the suffering has to be suffering, but I still have the disease. I could be in a good place today, but I still have the disease, even if I'm not aware of it. I'm beginning to interpret the addict who still suffers as any level or anyone who claims membership. I don't even know if this fits in and one of the things that saddens me is that book studies and step studies and tradition studies account for such a very small percentage of the meetings that are taking place anywhere.

Stretch: I'm glad you touched on that, Jack. I read this and I think everything I've heard before about the fifth tradition always discusses the

group and the purpose of the group and to carry the message and I think the focus of this is really on the addict who still suffers and what's interesting is in the entire twelve traditions, the word "addict" is only used one time. It's only used in this particular tradition and nowhere do they ever say what an addict is, cause we go back to the beginning and we say you're a member if you stop using, but it doesn't say you're a member if you're an addict. But you have to be an addict to be a member, so somewhere there's a distinction between a person who stops using and a person who's an addict. Nobody has said what an addict is. So I think that this changes the focus of the traditions from somebody who walks in the door and has a desire to somebody who now becomes a member of a brotherhood of addiction and the similarity and the reason for the whole thing is because it does allow people with an addiction to find a place and to find an understanding and a hope and a strength that they could never find outside of N.A. And I think there's a reality here that the addict has to be, and I hope so, sitting in a meeting listening, I always felt it was the newcomer, too. I've got a different perspective of it. I think the total focus here is like going uphill. You've got the group, the purpose, and carrying the message. There's a lot of beauty and a lot of strength in that. So, I got a whole different perspective today.

Woman: I really like the things that I've heard said here. I think the only thing that I want to add is that the message is, I thought for a long time that the only message was you don't have to use anymore. Maybe right down at the bottom that's true, but that's not enough for me. The message that I get now is really what Mitch talked about, that there's a way out. The steps... That spiritual awakening is what the message is. I think the focus on that, when we talk about this in the book would encourage step study meetings, would encourage a focus on what the way out actually is, on what that message actually is. No matter where we're at in dealing with the disease of addiction. That disease is very active in my life and that's the hope that keeps me going, whether I'm, I don't care where I am in my recovery. It was the hope that kept me going when I came in, when all I wanted to do was just not have to use anymore and it's the hope that keeps me going today when sometimes there's not much else that does that. When I've doubted that these steps work in my life, when I've had those moments of, oh sh-t, I've been working them and they've been about the most painful moments I've ever known. That clearly to me is the message of hope that they do work.

Danette: A couple of things that people said as far as the addict who is still suffering...makes more sense. But what came to me while we were talking about it is that I wonder sometimes maybe our tendency is to go towards the newcomer, the person that's obviously suffering because it's easier. It's easier to be responsible and to want to carry the message, be supportive of someone who's obviously suffering. It takes more thought, it takes more consistency to

feel that, you know, I'm here in this meeting and I need to be willing and able and responsible enough to carry the message to anybody. And carry a strong message, ..., here we're all suffering from the disease. I have a question. I've often thought about these traditions being for the groups and yet a group is really an inanimate kind of an object so that the individual is the one that has to be practicing the principle, to actually make the traditions work, to make them come alive and this one in particular, a group, as such, can't carry any message, it doesn't work. And yet, it has to somehow. This tradition has to be carried out, so I asked myself, how does a group carry the message and the first thing that came to mind is that the people in the group are the people responsible for that group, whether you have a steering committee or however your group does it, the people that feel most responsible for that group, whether they're aware of it or not are taking on the responsibility of carrying the message. So how do we do that? The only thing that came to my mind was by the people that we choose to carry out that commitment, those people, and that they need to be people, members who are aware of this overall responsibility, the message and having to carry it and carrying it to everybody, not just the obviously suffering people and by the leaders that we choose each week to run that meeting. That was really as far as I got with it, but I think that's a question that I would want to explore some more. What are the actual ways that a group carries the message? Since the group is made up of people, what are the ways those people need to be made aware, need to become aware of their responsibilities in carrying the message. There's some, I'm sure. I know there's lots of things that the groups actually do, real obvious things, the way they're set up. I'm at a loss to carry that any further, but that's the main question that came up in my mind. I haven't heard enough to satisfy me.

Steve: I was thinking about two things that I've heard. The thing about who is the suffering addict. There's a few meetings I go to where a little preamble before the opening prayer is to have a moment of silence for addicts who are still suffering inside and outside the room. I know when I hear that I always thought of, generally I thought of somebody who was here one time and wasn't anymore. I believe that even the member with a few days can carry the message. When I was first clean, I got a sponsor who was heavy into service, all kinds of it and especially twelfth step work and we were short of members so we jumped all over people and so he grabbed me and said come on, we're going on a twelfth step call. There was a learning process there that was taught to me and I was turning around and teaching it to someone else and that the recipient, most often, identified more with the guy with a few days than they did with a guy with a few years, because it was something they could visualize, a couple of days. There is a lot of different ways of carrying the message and I think we've touched on. I'm not sure how it was going to be approached. The emphasis isn't on twelfth step work so much anymore because we've gotten so goddamned organized, If we

could bring it back to the group or.... I guess if there were going to be a word change in any tradition, that this particular tradition is it. The message is kind of heavy. The message of recovery or the N.A. message would seem more appropriate. I think the message of recovery just says it all. I don't know if that would ever fly, but I think if there was one tradition where there would be a word change, I think this one would be it. I like the idea of the other purposes. It seems like it'd be a good idea just to identify the word primary ...

Woman: Something that just came up when I was thinking about each group.... primary purpose. When I moved to New York, ... I was a newcomer to the area and I didn't... I don't know, it's just different there. You were talking about being receptive to new people, whether they're newcomers or oldtimers and I didn't feel that and I think it's the groups responsibility to a new face, a newcomer, that primary purpose, that carrying the message is that we've got to... for being here. I think that's the group's purpose. That just popped into my head and it may not be the primary purpose but it's certainly a responsibility to make the newcomer and the addict who still suffers feel welcome here.

Man: The steps ad-hoc committee was discussing the purpose of working the steps and they got around to looking at the twelfth step xxx the primary purpose xxxx having had a spiritual awakening as result of these steps, the message ... the group ... This is the message, we had a spiritual awakening. It might be interesting when really getting into writing this step to do a little coordination with the steps ad-hoc committee and see how they're wording this. Maybe that might help us, particularly if both sets are going to be in the same book, it should sound the same, as far as what the message is. Something Greg was saying about the groups not having personalities, I don't know if I really agree with that the meetings shouldn't have personalities. I think sometimes there's no avoiding that. For one thing, I don't feel that it's necessarily wrong for a group to have a personality. I think that's part of the dynamics or force that we have, again that gets into the whole thing about colorful and expressive, ...conformity type thing ... I don't really see too many groups that don't have much of a personality at all. The ones that do have personalities are either very positive energetic personalities or extremely negative personalities, but they do have personalities. Part of discussion we were having yesterday also is that if every group in the city's main focus is on the newcomer, getting clean and staying clean, when the group comes along, we want our focus to be on living clean, life issues and stuff like that. Are they not carrying the message, since the rest of the city carries the message. I think this part is really vital to this tradition, to really have a clear understanding of what the message is and it's really pretty wide and attribute it to mean for the newcomer and for people that after their first

year or two that are having problems in their later recovery, a spiritual awakening is an ongoing process.

Man: I've just got a couple of things here. I really like the beginning in terms of the, when it talks about the primary purpose, referring to that there are other purposes that what we conventionally go to meetings for and those purposes that we attend meetings and then talking about the message and the spiritual awakening aspect of how the steps come into play there, maybe working with the steps ad-hoc committee would be appropriate and getting into the suffering addict in terms of the description of that not just being the newcomer. Then it comes down to carrying it as a group in terms of the atmosphere that we have for this to flourish, a loving atmosphere that we create, that is we talk about here. That just seems to be the direction that we've gone in terms of how we talk about what goes on in N.A. now. ... from the personal contact, the human-ness, that level, ... gotten lazy and have had the service structure to do what we've heard was done in the past or we did before we first got clean because we didn't have something, some structure doing it for us. I think we need to say something about that in terms of the, cause here you talk about it, there was no choice, that was how you had to do it or it wouldn't exist. There'd be no twelfth step work. No phonedines, nobody answering phones somewhere, no phone system. The way I took it was real personal and there's something that seems to be missing now in terms of that one-on-one kind of stuff, ...

Man: The idea that every time anybody asks anything that we have to go running to a committee to get permission. I've been involved in psychotherapy groups where suffering was ... a very high level and you were either suffering or in denial (Laughter) and the goal was to make sure that within the week that you had experienced something painful so you could come in and share about it and it's my hope that although we are inclusive rather than exclusive, that the emphasis be that the goal is not to share the message that yes, I too suffer from That there is something a little more positive. One page is written about suffering and then there's hope. It's like the old pitches I used to hear. That was the goal, to get the newcomer to identify, you had to share disease for 90 percent of the pitch and then you give 10 percent or five minutes at the end of hope.

Man: I kind of like that, it reminded me of the pain, the suffering. I was taught that if you're suffering all the time, you've got something wrong. I do want to do a cautionary thing about the moving away from the newcomer. I don't think suffering is only the newcomer's by any means. I think there is suffering among people who are already here, but to me that's the same sort of category as the disease and the focus moving away from drug addiction, that without the need to abstain from substances that none of us would be here, that without the drug aspect of our addiction, none of us would be here.

I think that that's the same kind of category. I'd like to see this address that idea of the newcomer versus the person who's around suffering in the same way. We talk about the newcomer being the most important person and there is a lot of emphasis on the newcomer, however, and then go into, I'd hate for us to lose sight of we do a lot of things for the new member. The old, grandiose, and it was extremely grandiose, line about what is the addict or the alcoholic who still suffers to somebody who never heard of us. That's really grandiose, but years and years and years ago, that's where it was at. People would pound the pavement and go into shooting galleries, bars and methadone clinics and drag people out, all those poor suffering addicts who'd never heard of us and most of them were loaded and weren't suffering at all at the time. (laughter) That's all. When they weren't loaded, they were suffering. We used to do that and we have relegated twelfth step work to service boards, committees and treatment centers. We have. We have relegated that right. I don't even see twelfth step work as so much a responsibility as a right. Responsibility. The term has come up a lot of times and every time someone says it, I just click into the ability to respond. Responsibility is something I want. The ability to respond to a situation. I don't want to be unable to respond my life. I want responsibility. The courage to help carry the message to newcomers or oldtimers, courage is the key when we're talking about carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. When you walk into a meeting and you look up to somebody when you first come around ... messed up their life... it takes courage and time. When you are carrying the message, whether it's to the newcomer or someone who's been around for a while you are making an affirmation to your recovery. You are standing up and being counted. That principle of affirmation ties into the idea of carrying the message. How do we carry the message? I wrote down patience, consistency, care, empathy, the atmosphere of recovery, the format. One thing that I haven't heard mentioned that I think could be developed in here is the ... of our relationship with relapsers.

SIDE #2

One of my pet peeves is going into a meeting and seeing someone coming back off of a relapse and people telling them it's okay. I think we should welcome our relapsers back and make them at home, but I don't think we should carry the message to them that relapse is okay because relapse is a violation of what N.A. is about, although addiction is a relapsing disease and relapse is a reality. It is in direct contradiction with what Narcotics Anonymous is about. So this is the place to talk about how to carry the message or how a group should carry the message to a relapser or a chronic relapser.

Steve Sigman: I don't think, well maybe it's me, but I don't think there's a lot of clarity about this and I have thought that originally it meant, primary

purpose meant primary, before anything to carry the message to addict who still suffers active addiction, focusing on the newcomer before the other people. If you can't carry the message to someone who's just beginning to look for recovery, then we can't recover ourselves. I don't think it can all be said, even if you added words to the tradition that would clarify it or changed words or thought of it in terms of primary not meaning... or other purposes. It's all one purpose, but before we carry it to ourselves, the group has to carry it to the newcomer or there's nothing to carry. I've not heard that from your discussion and it may be my understanding is different but it doesn't seem clear. My preference would be to discuss it longer. I know that it isn't realistic here, maybe the traditions committee will do that. I don't think there's enough clarity on that aspect to write about.

Hollie: Just to follow up on what Steve said. I think that deserves more discussion, too. I like the discussion that the still suffering addict is not just the newcomer because I have experienced that in my own recovery. I also can remember very vividly lots of meetings that I've gone into that I've walked into hurting and a newcomer has been there and through listening to them and sharing with them what I've been through, that my program has taken away the suffering that I've been through because I was able to share it with someone else. I was able to share my recovery with someone else so I think that's something that does deserve some more discussion. If not here, at least in the traditions ad-hoc. Everything else I've heard about this has been just great.

Woman: ... The other thing I've heard that's been said that I didn't hear covered very well is the question that Danette brought up, too. How a group carries the message instead of individuals. The first thing to come to mind is how I personally carry the message, how an individual carries the message. For me that's always been a definition of what a home group functions as. A place where we make those decisions and decide about it. But that's because I got clean in a place that had home groups. It's always been interesting to me when you take a group inventory with somebody with thirty days sitting there and you say how wonderfully you greet people when they walk in the door and the person with thirty days says that's not true. So I think there should be a way which groups carry the message that is not just contingent on the individuals at that given meeting at that given moment. For me, that gets into the ... of a home group and making those decisions together and making sure that that's what that group's about.

Jack: I think that there must be something to the point that Steve made based on the very popular statement that's made in our literature about the newcomer being the most important person in the meeting. That would kind of tend to lead some credence to what Steve was saying that perhaps the priority of each meeting of the group is to first carry the message to that

person, also kind of...with the discussion that's gone on of who is this addict who still suffers, basically coming from... that it's all addicts. I'm also including, based on what Steve said the addict who comes to the room and is no longer there, who isn't present today, who's back out using ... he may not now be suffering because he's loaded at the time, but we tend to believe he's suffering at least based on our experience with... I guess, tend to know that he's suffering whether he's aware of that at the moment or not. He will quickly become aware that he's suffering. I guess Becky was talking about how the group in it's business meeting in discussing what and how they go about doing things and sometimes their perception of Oh yeah, we're just doing a bang-up job and the newcomer says you're doing what!!! Don't pat yourself on the back. It brings again the traditions, in total, being an inventory guide for each group. Because groups need to take inventory, to look at these things. Are we meeting our primary purpose? And beginning to look at what that primary purpose is. I do agree that this indicates that there are several secondary purposes to... Maybe each group needs to define what those are.

Tom: I'm real glad Steve brought that up. I've never seen a meeting yet, that a newcomer came into the room and the focus didn't immediately go to the newcomer anyway. Then I have a really embarrassing memory. A lot of years ago, we had a meeting called the rolling stone meeting. It was a meeting where everybody came and shared their disease. It was a great meeting. We had dramas to share about every week, what life was like and it became a very close meeting. We had it in a place that was kind of isolated and hard to get to. This meeting had gone on about a year and everybody used to come and say how nice it was that we could get down to stuff and talk about things you don't talk about at regular meetings and a bus pulled up one day and the salvation army, and all these newcomers piled in the room and we're sitting there saying goddamnit, there's other f-cking meetings around, why don't you go there. I remember I had coined a phrase for myself afterwards. This was like what you call spiritual selfishness. It's a good example of what happens to groups that don't follow our traditions. The group fell apart within a few months. It just didn't exist anymore.

Donna: I was glad that Steve had brought up the concept of the twelfth step call. When I first came around my understanding of the still suffering addict was the not-yet-comer, the person who never made it and above all the group's responsibility is to do that which preserves it's continuity, it's health, it's ability to grow into, to stay in existence, to be there for generations to come, that kind of element. I like the comment that Stretch made about carrying the message being an action ... inherent in that and I think that's so much of what we do is not what we say but what we do. It's really the process, not the content and I think that it's in that way that we are doing what Steve asked about. We are carrying the message to the very newest

member who comes in and wonders, is recovery really possible, yes it is because we continue to recover and we talk about our disease in spiritual terms. We talk about our recovery in spiritual terms and I think that kind of carries itself to understanding that we suffer in spiritual terms. I don't think that excludes any of us how long we are in recovery as long as we are practicing our recovery in spiritual terms. That's carrying the message. I think your point was really well taken, ...

Man: I think a couple of the other quotes that tie into this is said about the newcomer being the most important person. The line about the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. That's what we're talking about in carrying the message, the process. Funny that line doesn't say who it's therapeutic for. It is therapeutic for the one who is being cared for or is it therapeutic for the one who's doing the caring. Also, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. That whole concept comes into this. I liked what Jack said about the traditions being an inventory guide for each group. One of the things I've heard done is group business meetings. It can be real interesting. Sometimes when I'm doing a traditions workshop, I'll ask how long has it been since your group had as the topic of it's business meeting, how good are we doing carrying the message. Most groups have not discussed that in years, unfortunately. Or another good one is, what's the message of our group? Something else that comes up here and there's probably a lot of disagreement about is ... I have really been very much offended by at times, across the country some of the names we choose for a group. And how much those violate traditions.

Kim: We really do carry the disease easier than we carry the message of recovery a lot of the time. One of the ways that we might want to... The way that meetings are structured can be one of the ways that we fulfill that primary purpose, like if it's an hour and a half meeting, the first fifteen minutes or the last fifteen minutes are always made available to newcomers to share. There's lots of ways to do this within the structure of the meeting that doesn't make it this either or thing which is Oh my God, there's a newcomer... If there are newcomers in the room, that's all it's about. So many of the meetings that so many of us go to, the treatment centers pull up in their vans and twenty-five newcomers pile out and their sitting there and as Tom pointed out a lot of them don't even feel like members, who knows why they're there, but if we make sure that we give the opportunity in the meeting for the newcomer to speak or if most groups run a beginners meeting half an hour before or forty-five minutes before the regular meeting, there's a lot of ways to do this where we are fulfilling our primary purpose and acknowledging that there are other purposes. I think the way that we have turned over the right of that twelfth step work is one of the saddest things, I mean for me personally. I sat in a state hospital talking to an addict, and I mean a state hospital that would make your hair stand on end. I was in

there talking to somebody that had almost died recently and when I walked out of there I thought about all those times when I was first going around A.A. and was taken on those twelfth step calls that... I talked with some other people in N.A. about this. I talked to these two guys about twelfth step work and what it used to mean and what I learned during that first year and a half I was going primarily to A.A. meetings and how I don't see us do that in N.A. anymore and When I was talking to these two guys and I was saying how taken care I felt by God when I would knock on the door of those apartments. I felt safe. It was the most incredible feeling I've ever had, of the safety that I felt and I'm talking to these two burly N.A. guys, talking about that incredible feeling of twelfth step work and they're saying are you kidding! I wouldn't walk up an apartment these days and knock on a door. Some crack addict is gonna blow me away. And they were serious. They would not do that. (laughter) Now, the truth is they may be smart (louder laughter), and I don't think you want to convince some of those people that I went on twelfth step calls with that there was anything, that there could ever be anything unsafe about going with God to do a twelfth step call. They just didn't believe it. I know that in me there's a sadness about not having those experiences so much anymore and what I get are the newcomers ... in the door from the treatment facilities sitting there going, Oh God, we're at another meeting and we don't even know whether it's A.A., N.A. or C.A.. Forget it, they don't know where they are and they don't really give a shit. They're just trying to sound good so they can have cookies or something. Okay. The suffering thing, I really agreed about that, too. Suffering can become an art form and I don't think that's what this really means. ... that I suffer from the disease of addiction on an ongoing basis and one of the things that happens around here is that people don't feel like they can share at a meeting unless they've got doom and gloom to share. You've got to have a drama to share to feel like there's anything really going on and that's not true. The inventory of the groups is another really good way to ask yourself, ... But there are ways to structure the meetings that address the primary purpose without excluding the others and I don't think it needs to be an either or thing. I think we can do that very effectively.

Woman: Donna really said it for me. The only thing that I was going to add was that I don't think it's just the discussion in meetings that carries the message to newcomers. I didn't remember what people said, but I did remember if they walked up and remembered my name or caught me before I got out the door or called me and I think sometimes we miss that. It's just what the discussion is in a meeting. If you have a step one meeting, does that mean you have to go back to step one. I think that we just carry that some times to simplistic terms. I can remember not having gone through treatment, not understanding a lot of times what people were talking about and that was good for me. It made me ask questions. I felt very loved and

cared for. And I think that's carrying the message. I don't think it's just whether the meetings focus on newcomers.

Danette: I just want to say that I really don't believe that we addressed Steve Sigman's concern here at all and that... It really caught me off guard because I believe it's a completely different way of interpreting the traditions than anything that we've been saying. We need to discuss that at some point. I don't think it's just that we kind of addressed that. I don't think we did. I think it's a really completely different way of looking at this.

Man: I don't agree. I don't think that we did very much, but I don't see a big problem. We discussed the tradition, Tom said it and I thought of another situation where we had a meeting called "three and beyond." Everybody could come but you only shared if you had three years or more. It was great and it was set up by the people that really wanted to get it going and didn't felt like their needs were being met because other meetings were always so inundated by newcomers. So they had this meeting and other people with lesser time were coming because they felt that what they were getting there was a real good recovery message. In retrospect, they didn't fulfill this tradition and it was never discussed. I know a lot of things were discussed but this one wasn't. I really see how it lends itself to the first and twelfth tradition... The outcome of that was that everybody in this meeting could participate in any kind of voting or anything so gradually they started lowering the time and the people that wanted it to begin with, somehow disappeared. The final outcome is that there's just a regular meeting. Fortunately, there's still a meeting. It took care of itself or it would have died. I think the warning needs to be put in there that... maybe with a few examples of what can happen... it definitely needs to be there.

Jack: ... In looking at the example that Steve just talked about, a group or a meeting that's set up so that the only people who can share have over three years. I know of some speaker meetings where the group decided they would only have speakers with over ten years to speak. Now does that mean it's not carrying the primary purpose. It could, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it's not meeting it's primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers being the newcomer, if that's the first and foremost thing that each group should consider, it doesn't mean that that's not being addressed, even if the speaker that night doesn't necessarily do a good job of speaking to the newcomer, the group's purpose is to do that by the group paying attention to the things that Becky was talking about, is that we first ask for the hands of newcomers so we know who they are and when the meeting's over, we make sure that at least those of us that are really members of that group are going to pay attention to these people, are going to offer their phone numbers, ask them out to coffee, whatever it takes to make them feel welcome and loved. That's the primary message and that we

want them to come back. And still be able to do these other things and still be able to meet that primary purpose. It's not just in the format of the meeting. It's in how responsible the group members are. I think the point that Greg made, I certainly have been sitting here evaluating what I'm doing at my own group and what hasn't been done, that lack of inventory taking. I don't see myself going back like a Nazi and changing it. ... Really what I hope that a book would do, is not solve everybody's problems but make me sit and think about what I'm doing.

Greg: ... I've heard it three or four times, references to treatment centers and their insincerity and I really hope we can avoid those kinds of generalizations. There's some real sincere people in treatment centers.

TRADITION SIX DISCUSSION

TAPE #9 -SIDE ONE

Man: What I've done in workshops on the Sixth Tradition is gone through a lot of terms and talked about what the different terms and their meaning, gone through and talked about endorsement, talked about financing and what that means. Talked about lending our name and the potential problems with that. How we lend our name. Talked about affiliating with outside enterprises. Talked about what the problems are with ????? and how they divert us from our primary purpose. I've never been to what I felt was a really strong workshop of the Sixth Tradition that went much beyond defining some of those terms. There is a lot of connection with other traditions, certainly Twelve, Four, One, Three, Five. There's a lot of relationship between Six and the other traditions. I don't think this has been explored well enough by anybody.

Woman: I'm not going to explore it right now but I am going to say that when I look at that, part of what Greg said was that we tend to go into defining the terms and understanding and making relationships with the other traditions but I sat there for a minute thinking what are the principles inherent in this tradition. How do you isolate what they are. I guess that is really one of the things I would like to hear. What are the principles?

Kim: One of the areas that I have really done some thinking about recently has been around the growth of the N.A. fellowship outside the U.S. and the fact that many times it is non-addict or professionals or whoever are wanting information to help start meetings and do that kind of thing. To encourage the start of Narcotics Anonymous. Now, my understanding is that Alcoholics Anonymous spread at least in Europe well actually throughout the world during World War II when there were soldiers who were in A.A. who were traveling out by the war and started meetings. One could also say it should

have been disastrous because they would have been affiliated with the U.S. Armed Services. So does that mean the fact that some of these organizations that are wanting to start meetings is that a group endorsing or lending the N.A. name... I'm thinking about the situation in India. Just discussions not even with specifics of this but I think we do need to, even though I'm real leery of defining terms because I think definitions end up being real limiting, but at least raising the discussion on this, to keep in mind. I mean Jack has brought it up several times about the traditions, just stuff that we are going to be putting together is going to be used by fellowships outside the U.S. and to think about what some of this means. That's the place where this has been coming up for me the most in terms that I read things, the letters from different countries and the whole issue of the translation stuff and financial stuff and all those things that are coming up seem to be influencing decision making on what's happening in Narcotics Anonymous and the fellowships that we just need to think about it. I know I'm really vague on it but that's the one place where I've thought about this tradition.

Man: It's kind of like the Sixth Tradition needs something additional ... in terms of our primary purpose. We get into talking about those other purposes that we go to meetings. What happens is a lot of times those other purposes become the main focus of a lot of the things we do. And that is what this tradition is expanding on, some of that stuff we just touched on in the tradition before and where we get into trouble is when we make those things the primary focus of the group. That's what I see here in terms of like okay we just told you what the primary purpose of your group is and you have discussed that and now these are some of things that can happen in terms of how you can get off track and the need to get back on track in terms of purpose. It says here problems with money, property, or prestige but the experience that I've seen is Now is that what we're all about, getting together and putting on these bigger and greater events. We were talking before about the Twelve Step work when it was individuals and humanistic kind of thing that I heard and we've gone away from that and a lot of partying, a celebration of recovery is what we call it, but what happens is when we get to the celebration of recovery, you hear people talk about things like, campouts or small events that are real personal and are a one to one contact, being really great and then we get into well like how big was your convention. Was it bigger than last years. Did you make more money. It's bigger and greater and that kind of thing away from the humanistic thing of what we talked about.

Man: One of the places I see this coming into play is in mailing lists. People using our mailing list to send us information on treatment seminars or Bobby Earl speaking somewhere. I received a brochure from them on AIDS. It was addressed to the Mid-Atlantic Region. I think this is some area we need to talk about. When we give our mailing list to someone else, that is a definite

endorsement and that we shouldn't do that. I guess that also gives us an area to talk about clubhouses again. What is our primary purpose. ?? The other one is that treatment programs who use our name and advertise our meetings in their brochures say you can have a meeting here and then you pick up a piece of their literature and it says Narcotics Anonymous meetings held here on a regular basis. That definitely is a form of endorsement ?? The overall one is to help us focus on the spiritual rather than the materialistic thing.

Stretch: Reading the Twelve Traditions, one after the other, is like the staircase that I discussed yesterday. I think Seven and Six are sort of backwards. I really believe that Seven is the one that should have come before Six because when you read Seven that every N.A. group should be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions and then you read Six it sort of makes a lot more sense than reading Six then Seven. I'm even wondering if they had done it that way that they would have referred to it beside N.A. group, N.A. itself because I don't see any groups being involved in conventions. I see them being involved in parties and dances saying this is an official N.A. dance and other things. But I think the outside enterprise and related facility, I think a lot of that is two different things. I think one relates to the treatment centers and the other situation you are referring to Bob, I think the most concern is the related facility. This is so easy to say stay away from outside enterprises because you're going to have a problem. The problem is that everybody says that's "???" but gee it's only an N.A. dance, or it's only an N.A. picnic, or it's only an N.A. whatever. And that can't be "?????" I sort of feel that these two are in the wrong place. I kind of feel that Seven really needed to be before Six.

Danette: I'm just trying to think of examples and experiences of my own that I can remember to try and help figure out what this means to me. I really don't come up with much. The thing that does stand out though, Stretch just touched on it, we're talking about it says an N.A. group. We're back to that thing again. How are we going to relate that to the rest of N.A. because this, especially this tradition, is automatically for most people assumed to mean N.A. doesn't do this. It's not just an N.A. group but that is what it says. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend ... But how much opportunity is there for an N.A. Group to find itself in that position individually. Not a whole lot. There are times when I know it does come up. Not to the same extent. I'm not really coming up with any particular examples or memories that would help me out but there are some feelings or some thoughts or principles that come up when I think about it. There is a sense of anonymity and self-sufficiency that come up through those and courage. It takes courage to stand alone and who we are rather than endorsing or feeling the need to endorse. And the courage, even more importantly, that this spiritual basis involved here is more important than

money, property or prestige could ever be. They just don't compare to selling out. Humility and responsibility are the other two that came to mind. That it takes a sense of humility to be sure of who and what we are and be true to that. And then the responsibility just to carry that through.

Craig: VOICE VOLUME VERY LOW. ... we have to be really careful because we spend the money really quick. It's my hope that my fellowship is not ?????? a vow of poverty as a result of this tradition. On the other hand I don't believe that throwing money at addicts has ever helped any of them recover. ... But that is the solution. I think that there is a distinction between us following our traditions and forcing other people to follow our traditions. ... Personally I have less of a hard time with other people listing the fact that an N.A. meeting is held at their facility because I know that when I went to Yosemite I opened up a little Yosemite newspaper and there was a N.A. meeting listed ... and that was great. I had good public information. (AIRPLANE) It's very confusing whether the program is N.A. or one of the local treatment programs because every person that gets up (AIRPLANE) shares about their gratitude to the recovery house. But are individuals allowed to express that kind of gratitude or not. Particularly if they endorse other Twelve Step programs if it's something that is within their experience. I was at this meeting the other night and ... aw shut up and sit down, go back to where you belong. That type of stuff. Maybe we can figure out some way of demonstrating the spiritual principles within this tradition allows people at the group level to know whether it's the groups business or whether it's none of their business.

Greg: Stretch said something that triggered a thought in me about the relationship between six and seven. I don't know if they need to be reversed but certainly there is a thread of meaning that comes through if you look at them together. Kind of like we don't support others or allow them to support us. There's a thread of meaning. I don't know if it needs to be reversed to get that thread of meaning but that concept of our relationship to those outside of us being expressed as what we do and what they do is an interesting thought that occurred to me in that sense. I used to talk a lot about the difference between our endorsing an outside enterprise and allowing them to endorse us. But I'm not so sure that allowing them to endorse us would compromise the Seventh Tradition in accepting an outside contribution. You can make an endorsement as a contribution. So there are some interesting interplays that are going to go on there. Along with the list of clubhouses and treatment centers where abuse take place. Newsletters is another interesting potential source of abuse. There are a lot of people putting forth their own personal opinions in the name of Narcotics Anonymous newsletters. Autonomy, self-sufficiency, how we support ourselves.

Man: One of the things I wanted to mention Craig had already mentioned is the relationship what we endorse and what related facilities often seem to either endorse us or they even imply more of an affiliation than certainly exists. But this does point out that there are related facilities and I think this is an opportunity also to provide some methods on perhaps how to deal with some of those things. The group does have a responsibility to at least attempt to educate related facilities that endorse us or imply affiliation by their brochures. But to realize that that is all we can do basically. Perhaps within our own service structure, theoretically, we have control or power to do something about it. We obviously have even less at the level of related facilities but we can have the courage to set up a meeting or whatever to try and educate people and even offer them ways to accomplish what they feel they need to do without infringing upon our traditions. One of the things that I suspect that has been brought up perhaps what we need to really explore further is exactly how this applies to groups. I think at the area, region and world level they have a handle on this. I'm not sure that even at the group level that there isn't a reasonably good understanding of this tradition that people do, I've certainly heard this more responsibly discussed in how it's utilized but, I think that the examples that Mitch threw out and presented is the areas where there needs to be some more exploration of where it becomes less obvious, it's more subtle, how some of these endorsements and how money, property and prestige may be affecting groups negatively without their awareness. With the growth of the fellowship those things are becoming a little more obvious. These are real obvious and/or at least the way we have historically applied them I guess they're more obvious because that was perhaps the initial intent and what brought about the tradition is probably based on the areas that we I think have a fairly good understanding and application of. It's the things that have come about with growth of the fellowship that weren't necessarily, or maybe they were, maybe they did have the foresight knowing in applications Greg listed a possible future application. Maybe when the traditions were written maybe they had that in mind. But it's not as clear. I think those are the areas that Mitch touched on. That we really need to explore further and to be able to, if we can, point out some of the pitfalls, some of the problems that will come about with the pursuit of bigger and better conventions, more and more partying and more fundraisers and all of that kind of thing, how that can affect our groups.

Man: I was just thinking. When I first got clean there was a treatment program that said if you were an addict you could drink and held their graduations from a bar. They did that up until probably maybe eight years ago. I happen to run across one of the guys who I knew in those days. We used to have those big discussion about N.A. versus the philosophy that they were in. (AIRPLANE) Well I was following state of the art. I was following what was believed to be the state of the art in therapy then. I was following

the state of the art. And when I go to meetings now, since I've been coming around I've heard that transactional analysis that was the real answer. Everybody that was getting their education at that time went to transactional analysis and learned that. Now around the room, everyone is talking about codependency, ACOA and in five years we're going to be talking about something else. That kind of stuff diverts us, I think, from our primary purpose of talking about the spiritual principles and how they apply to recovery. We get into talking about the latest state of the art rather than talking about the spiritual principles that are involved in our recovery. But for N.A. the consistency is in our spiritual principles and I think that when we get into try to do therapy (AIRPLANE) therapy group I hear a lot of that. People are going to solve marital problems, people are going to solve this and that. We need to be real clear in this tradition on the difference between spiritual principles and state of the art treatment technology.

Man: VOICE VERY LOW - Five years ago ... when all this was going on in the ... region, N.A., A.A. language, the Sixth Tradition ... I remember when we were discussing the writing of the traditions and stuff a lot of ... dealing with the issue of the language and ... fundraising ... As the years went by some of those issues ceased to be that great of an issue. It no longer became the issue of the day. Now there is other issues of the day. In ten years ... It probably makes it more difficult not to focus on particular issues than to really focus on what the principles are behind the traditions. The principle that is going to help ten years from now ??? other issues ??? There was discussion last year about the World Service Office purchasing a building, property like that and I'm an alarmist. When I heard that I said wait a second. ... What do we mean by property? What do we mean by prestige? What do we mean by these kinds of things. These are issues that should be discussed. I was surprised that not that many people were alarmed by that. ... I always thought this tradition was to protect us from getting involved in things that are so cumbersome that we would lose our focus because these other issues would be coming out, prestige, ownership and things (AIRPLANE) poverty, how are you going to study on were you got Seventh Tradition funds. You actually got it from St. Frances ... vow on poverty. They decided to take a vow ... Because they had such potential to make so much money if they let themselves get loose. (AIRPLANE) They policed themselves that way. (AIRPLANE)

Danette: I just had a silly little esoteric kind of thought or concept. Something about property ... so if you're endorsing something you're getting money. Or you can get money because of your endorsement and financing. I wonder if there ever really was a time where a group tried to purchase a meeting place or tried to get involved that way with money and owning property and then lending the N.A. name is where you would probably get more with prestige like because you have our name on it and stuff. We have

prestige coming from that way. Really, really weird. I just had to throw it out.

Woman: One of the ways that this has been used in a very isolating kind of way is the N.A. language stuff that was so hostile about two years ago but it is also used as we don't need anybody. The addicts standing alone. Non-addicts forget it. We don't need you. We don't want you. Really tough guys. That's really, as far as I'm concerned a part of our disease. Because we are in society. We're not living these isolated existences off here. This ties in in part to give us guidance on our public relations policy. As we interact with organizations and institutions outside we don't endorse them, we don't finance them, we don't lend the N.A. name to them. It doesn't mean that it hasn't been said before that we can control what they do. We can ask but.... It also doesn't mean that we don't somehow have cooperative relationships with these related facilities. That they aren't related. The word related implies that there are facilities or organizations that might have something to do with what we are doing. That kind of addict v.s. non-addict thinking, that kind of we don't need the cooperation or support, that we don't need endorsements from outside I don't know if endorsement is the right word to use but it certainly helps to have a professional organization or therapist who refer people to N.A. say that is a good place to send people. To have schools, medical schools and where people are being trained to say you know what, N.A. is a really good approach. Send the addict there. The legal system referring addicts to N.A. now that is an endorsement of N.A. It doesn't say that we don't, it would be nice to be endorsed by these places. We don't endorse them. I think we really lose sight of that because this is used as an isolation kind of thing I think by addicts who, we didn't come in here knowing how to interact with society at large and we can just be in this cocoon and never have to deal with them and it is not realistic. It does imply to me that our program is not up for sale. It's not up for barter. What we have can't be traded on in the market place. It's not you do this for us and we'll do that for you. Just who we are and how we live our program is what it is about. I really agree with the kind of stuff Mitchell was talking about. I'm so glad he brought that up about the conventions and the financial thing. We can talk about at the group level or we can talk about the level of service that we're all at. Where the money is, is where the decisions are made about how the fellowship is going and I don't care what anybody says, that's what has happened. That's just truth. Money is what is making decisions at the world level of Narcotics Anonymous. It has to do with the sale of our books and with the people who are interacting with the fellowship outside. I'm not saying those people are doing anything necessarily wrong or making the wrong decisions. But it is money. The copyright is the property of only our literature is something that we really have to look at and really have to watch. There are problems attached to that. It is tricky ground. It doesn't say that we shouldn't own the copyright to our book. I don't think it says we

shouldn't own property. But we have to be careful about that. We have to really take a look at that. I certainly hope we don't talk about state of art therapy or anything in this tradition because I think as things come and go I think there will be different ... I do not see recovery from the disease of addiction and using words that help me to understand that like codependency as being outside endorsing anything. I think it has to do with my ongoing recovery from the disease that keeps me from other people. If there is common language that helps me to respond with that to people, I do not feel any restriction on not using that at a meeting or anywhere else that I am. I would hate to see us get into anything about other outside therapies except that we don't endorse them.

Man: I guess five warns us about our primary purpose and six warns us how (AIRPLANE) I think when it was written they had no idea of some of the things that would happen in the future. We don't know what will happen in our future. I definitely agree that yes we can cooperate with related facilities without endorsing them.

Woman: I definitely think that the clubhouse issue should be addressed here I don't really know in what capacity. But I think this would be a good place to address it. If we divert from our primary purpose I kind of see it decending?.. then addicts who may have found recovery may die which in essence affects N.A. as a whole which affects our common welfare. I kind of see it going back like that as a warning. If we are diverted from our primary purpose this can happen. ... sometimes in meetings we get these people coming in from T.C.'s or whatever and we have to sign these slips of paper saying that they were there. I hesitate. What about our anonymity. Does that say we're endorsing treatment centers. I don't know. Maybe we could look at that. What do you do. I don't know where we should address that. That's something that concerns me. Do we also address the fact that our traditions were adopted from A.A. Is this where we address the A.A. phobia because it isn't an affiliation here. Do we talk about it. I see people coming out of treatment centers. The way they're taught is clean and sober. There are people that still do this. That kind of stuff. I don't know if we want to put this in the book or address that issue. We should ... affiliation. We should talk about affiliation versus endorsement. Again, I feel it is the groups responsibility to make sure that when we make announcements there that when we get speakers for meetings you know the chairperson and all and they get speakers for meetings that there are people who believe in the Twelve Steps and Traditions of N.A. I believe that is the groups responsibility.

SIDE TWO

Man:tradition we hear the phrase the spirit of cooperation. I'm sure we need to discuss that. Cooperation versus (AIRPLANE) The dangers of as well as the necessity for it. We do have a tendency to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. I remember realizing we had this N.A. symbol that said ... we say goodwill. I've never been in an N.A. meeting where we discussed goodwill. There had been a tremendous amount of goodwill that has been extended to us. There is no doubt about that. Yet when it comes to our goodwill towards society it is not always a good example. We don't have a whole lot. don't have a whole lot of warmth in our attitude about some of these things (AIRPLANE) Just being involved with P.I. it seems that some of the things that have happened to us, ... if it was not for the goodwill of a lot of people like agencies and even our governments ... We need more and more of that goodwill. It is a practice ... we can look at. (AIRPLANE)

Man: First of all ... be really loving. ... the goodwill aspect of it and taking the responsibility for that. ... it may not be current five years from now is definitely a lot of the P.I. kind of stuff that we do. One of the questions that was hotly debated in our region was the helpline giving out phone numbers for AIDS hotline or the suicide hotline or any hotline that might be needed by someone who called us when they are reaching out for help. That's a fine line. Just giving out the phone number or making referrals, call the suicide prevention, call that number or the person saying I'm going to kill myself. Can you help me. It's a fine line in terms of how we end that kind of thing. Do we give out other information like that. Is that part of goodwill or is that part of endorsing. Which phone numbers do we give out. These are kind of questions we better start asking ourselves. At least we need to discuss that when we can or should ... someone else endorsing us. Like a brochure from a place that says how they present the issue. We host an N.A. meeting or we accommodated an N.A. meeting in our facility grounds or we have an N.A. meeting ... give out to the public. That's something we want to look at. Or do we have to look at that at all in terms of we can't help the endorsement. We just say well we pick up our meeting and move it or we say figure it out yourself. Somebody once approached me about meetings in churches. It's a violation. We say religion doesn't matter and most of our meetings are in churches. I can't understand that. Then there was an Eleventh Step meeting in Albany that had a format for the meeting that was a specific meditation. There was a different way of doing the meditation and that was the format of the meeting. (AIRPLANE)

Man: One of the things I would like to address is speaking about ourselves as a spiritual fellowship, talking about ourselves, what does it mean to be a spiritual fellowship. Why aren't we interested in money, property and prestige? What are the tenants of a spiritual fellowship? comparison of treatment programs rather than just focus on what defines us as a spiritual fellowship. What are the tenants of spiritual fellowship. What do they mean

and how do we apply those to carrying our message. How do we take the spiritual tenants spiritual fellowship and apply it to carrying the message. That is what this tradition really addresses. It tells us what is not important like money, property and prestige. It also warns us that those are things that we are very subject to. That was asking for an example and I was thinking about when I was chairing for Mid-Atlantic, we were asked to come up to New England to have a regional. We got to this place for the meeting and there wasn't any of the local fellowship. It came time for ... I said holy shit. Those were the days we were living out of our pockets. I said where is the local fellowship. They said we wouldn't allow them to come. ... It will cost \$600.00. But they were bringing the region in. They didn't want the local fellowship to be a part of that. That's how this sometime goes in new developments. We're not only talking about ourselves in this country, we're talking about developments in other countries and that is how it happens when what prestige do we subscribe to title and whether it is a title of a trusted servant, group level, the area level, regional level or the world level. That can sometimes divert us from our primary purpose too. I saw that happen. I think somehow we need to talk about that. I hadn't thought of that for years and ????? said try and give me an example and it just came to mind. It was a hell of a party. You know \$600.00. Our purpose to take it there was to carry the message to the local fellowship. Help N.A. grow in that place and their intent was to treat us as though we were prestigious folks and they wanted to make sure that we were properly entertained. I was at a meeting in Santa Barbara recently and they said the Lord's Prayer. It brought back memories of meetings I used to go to (AIRPLANE)

Man: I think kind of get back to Six and Seven sort of being together, I think this is an opportunity and I think it is something that has to be addressed to the committee that we have to look at other countries. We have to give it a good hard look. I think the customs of other countries and what's happening in other countries is sometimes a meeting is started by a TC so maybe it's a meeting not a group. Maybe the treatment facility needs to do it for their own benefit. ... and we have a letter from Russia that came in which was very touching for me personally on how it effected other people from there. They couldn't call themselves Narcotics Anonymous. They're running a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in a church and calling themselves the pilgrims group because they can't call themselves Narcotics Anonymous. I think this is a great opportunity for the committee to address some of the things that are happening in the foreign fellowship. From One until Five everything is sort of generic. But now we're getting into an area that these people are experiencing a different way of growth and a different way of starting. Maybe either way it happened in the United States twenty five or thirty years ago. Maybe some of the things that happened here are happening over there but we've grown away from that and they're just starting. I think somebody on the committee should be sensitive to the

communications that come in from international fellowships. We have an international register. I think this should be addressed in Six and certainly in Seven. I could see that there are going to be meetings started by facilities. There are going to be meetings started by churches. There are going to be meetings started by people other than "N.A. people". (AIRPLANE)

Man: I think this is a very important idea to really explore relationships with other fellowships. I hope we may be able to do some healing. There was a time when we talked in terms of being supportive of anything that helped an addict. If it helps an addict, it's okay. I guess that's cause there were so few things helping addicts. To me, one of the things that comes into this tradition is the principle of choice. How to limit someones choice about whether or not to embrace the N.A. philosophy. If you don't give them the right to choose, then you don't give them the right to reject. You don't give them the right to select for you. I think that that is something that can be worked in here that idea of choice. The Sixth Tradition ... really ties together. Really a strong tie. With the first half of the traditions which are more individual and the second half of the traditions seem to be more oriented towards the service structure. I can't help think of the possible relationship between problems of money, property and prestige and our defects of character. Steps ... traditions ... relationship of that can be developed. ... those ideas need to be presented again that we're not an anti fellowship. Somehow we've become a fellowship that is very anti.

Woman: I like hearing reference to a more loving approach. I kind of miss the good times when you used to talk about whatever is going to get that addict clean and happy. We don't do that and I think it's just a strange kind of fear. A lot of other stuff gets in the way. The good thing about being at this end of the table is that it's all been said by the time it gets here. The only thing I would like to highlight again was your question on how this can relate to the groups and one of my thoughts was exactly Greg said about the Lord's Prayer as an example of lending the name to something. And again the issue of clubhouses because I think clubhouses is one of those situations where groups more than anything else probably promote and support that ... existence, along with functions and parties. Maybe it is being assumed under regional offices now, I don't know.

TRADITION SEVEN

Speaker: I kind of think that this would be a good place to pose the question of why. I think if you answer the why, you sort of discuss the traditions. Why should every N.A. group be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions? ... they become autonomous, for all the reasons that a group should be self-supporting, they are not beholdng to anybody else. I think the

answer to why really answers the 7th Tradition and also, again, it becomes the reverse of 6. You sort of have to add on the primary purpose of 6 and say well if you are beholding to some group or you are beholding to some facility, then you are diverting yourself from your primary purpose. So I think it's a very short tradition, but a very important tradition and one in which I have heard a great deal of controversy.

Kim: ... my thinking on it is that this really does apply to the service structure in the following manner, that a group is made up of individuals and the individuals are the ones who contribute the money to that--the people who are members of the group. We tell newcomers and visitors not to contribute, so the members of the group financially support that group. The members of an area service committee which are the ASR's who represent those groups contribute, bring the financial contribution. In other words, that area service shouldn't, I don't believe, be going out doing car washes for the general public. They ought to be self-supporting in that the groups that make up that area service committee that have formed that special body should support that, and it just goes on up that way. When we start getting into things like--there's been so much controversy around P.I., just because that's the area I've worked in the most, that what self-supporting also means in terms of using things like billboards or free time or purchasing things, the self-supporting thing gets, really, this tradition gets flung around a lot and I think there needs to be discussion on it, not so much on specifics, but just opening up that the spirit of it is that the individuals, the members of that group, or the groups that make up that area, or the areas who make up that region, need to be able to support the services that the group, area or region--they need to support those. And if they can't support them, maybe they're not ready for the services. That responsibility for the services we have need to be supported by the N.A. body, and I know this applies specifically to the group, but I believe that other parts of the service structure can look to this for guidance about financial things. The other part of self-supporting definitely has to do with way beyond finances. It has to do with people's time, energy. One of the things that happened to me when I was P.I. Chairperson and I was doing the job about 30-40 hours a week and I was working at a job that did not fully support me, I was supported by my family to do this and as time went on and it felt less and less right to be doing what I was doing, I was setting and writing something on this tradition and I realized that N.A. was not being fully self-supporting for the services that it needed to get. I had gone and taken from my immediate family system to support me to do it. That maybe N.A. needed to be able to support that work and that part of why that service commitment had ceased to really work for me in my life was because I was taking on way more and that support was not coming from the World. For years, we did that. I mean I think that we are evolving to where we are more self-supporting for the services that we have, but it doesn't seem to work when we're not. You know, there starts to

be resentments. In my case, I became much more attached to the outcome of it, who I was in that job because I wasn't doing anything else; I got way off base. My thinking on it was "well, N.A. cannot afford to be paying for this, but I'll just make this sacrifice." I think we have to be real careful about that sacrifice business because it crosses over a line there. I think there's an underlying spirit of self-responsibility, of pride in that, of integrity again and of growth and you know, being able to respond to, as Greg says, or responsibility that's really important and when that's taken away from me as an individual from a group, from an area or whatever, it's quite harmful. I don't think it serves us.

Greg: One of things I've talked about when I talk about the 7th tradition is this. Tom brought up previously the principal of self-sacrifice. That it is through giving of ourselves, sacrificing our time, sacrificing our money, so on and so forth, that we receive, and how important that is to personal recovery. I would like to talk about the right and privilege of contribution. The right that I have to contribute to Narcotics Anonymous, to make my commitment answerable, whether that is with time, money, emotional support, whatever. I look at the support of the 7th Tradition kind of the way I look at the disease. I tie in the disease concept with the 7th Tradition of emotional and spiritual and talk about support in terms of physical, mental and spiritual, physical being effort or money or time; mental being supportive I'm supportive of what happens in N.A., verbal support--not talking bad about N.A. meetings, abiding by the traditions, all those, and the spiritual being my own deep love for Narcotics Anonymous. I explore the 7th Tradition in terms of those three areas. One of the things that comes up real strongly for me in the 7th Tradition and elsewhere is it's relationship to the anonymity in this case. One of the questions that comes up for me is this idea that we are separate and unique from society. That's the violation of the principal of anonymity and I think that, I know one of the things that comes up, if say for instance, this is a real good situation. A city government makes meeting space available for any group who wants it in their Parks and Recreation facility, free of charge. Should Narcotics Anonymous pay for that? If an average citizen shouldn't have to pay for that and no one else pays for it, are we going to single ourselves out and make ourselves different and special and above the policies of society and how do we reconcile that with the 7th Tradition? And the 11th and 12 Traditions, how do we reconcile that and maintain anonymity, maintain our lack of difference from society, of being part of society rather than something separate from? The whole counter culture issue comes up here and still maintain this fully self-supporting. Some of the arguments against cost equalization have come from 7th Tradition questions of self-supporting, along with autonomy questions. I think there is a very close relationship between self-supporting and autonomy. I don't know that it would be necessarily appropriate to address those in this work, but the resolution of those has however resolved itself,

may be used as an example in this material which would be a fairly fresh example, maybe not down the road. Certainly, currently, that's one of the 7th Tradition questions that's happening in our fellowship.

Jack: One of the things that occurred to me is that it ties in with the other traditions, aside from the anonymity. What it does is it seems to allow for the application of Traditions 2, 3, 4 and 5, probably even more than that, but as far as what we've discussed already, that's a principle that allows us to be able to apply at least those traditions that we've already discussed, 2, 3, 4 and 5 specifically.

New speaker: I would just like to support that concept that we support ourselves in a variety of ways, not just in the basket. The other place I've seen that come into question is when we pay rent for a room and paying less than what would be a reasonably acceptable amount, do we really fulfill what the tradition talks about? When we use a meeting room for \$5.00 a month, are we really being self-supporting when we accept the use of facilities for less than what would be a fair, reasonable compensation. I've seen groups into that, have a lot of money and a church has been nice enough to allow us to meet there is getting \$5.00 a month. We really need to focus on making sure that we're compensating fairly for the space. The other thing is that we can get some good will out of that, too, because I remember sometimes in the beginning when we met in some churches, we did some things for the church. We helped paint the room, did some things that added something there. Then we felt like we were really contributing something. That's all I have to say.

Kim: I hear what your saying. I just know that in New York City if we were paying going rates for meeting space per square foot, there wouldn't be a meeting in the city cause it's financially prohibitive--the rents there. Also, we have to remember that this is going to be used outside of here and places like India, according to Tom, those people have absolutely no money at all. So, in a lot of places, not just India, but that we've got to be real careful about what we put in here about financial things from a perspective, it's hard to have it, but to maybe not be specific, but that spirit of self-supporting and doing things that contribute. I was at a meeting on the big island and they had scheduled a day to clean up the yard. It was some kind of YMCA or something. They were going to come on Saturday for a couple of hours and trim bushes and clean the yard, etc. That was an agreement they made when they rented it. The maintenance of a space, making suggestions of things like that and maybe not getting into anything. People really got hung up on this stuff and take it so literally and financial things vary so much.

Tom: I think that in some ways it would be good to state the real fact that we have this tradition that states that we should be fully self-supporting. ...

we have never been self-supporting. ... The functions carries us through--fundraisers, etc. We did a breakdown what our expenses were for the region to run the office and all the services provided and what comes to it through the area and groups and the percentage was like nothing and I did some calculations and just looking at it personally, what does it really cost for me as a member to be fully self-supporting. I used to put \$.50 or \$1.00 in the basket. What it really takes for me to be fully self-supporting is a couple dollars in the basket. We don't like to talk about money for some reason. Asking money from our membership is something that we never like to bring up and the reason we have to and this sounds like a Jim and Tammy Baker campaign, but the money usually always comes when you bring it out. But I think that needs to be discussed, particularly in this tradiiton, just the fact that what does it take each member to be fully self-supporting. The spiritual aspect is just tremendous. It's a thing that the first steps started giving me some insight as to what integrity is all about, that we would decline a contribution from outside of our fellowship. For addicts to refuse a handout is like "trust me." What if we do something different here. We stop up ourselves and I know the way we're looked at outside of Narcotics Anonymous--they hear that we are not looking for any funding or contributions--when people hear that we are not looking for contributions, their defenses go down and they go home. Those kinds of things are really important in this tradition. There's a lot more to the message here than just what pertains to this tradition. A couple of years ago, we had this discussion about what came up with P.I. We were into T.V. space, radio space, billboards, park benches for free because first of all, at one time the requirement that they provide that kind of space for us and then when they lifted the requirements that these networks had to do this, some of them just continued the practice and also the question came up well, gee, I'm really accepting an outside contribution by doing this kind of stuff, by taking free space and this would cost somebody quite a bit of money. We could never have afforded to do it if they hadn't given to us for free. What we really had to look at was that we were providing something. We were providing a service of information to the public about Narcotics Anonymous, that there is a program of recovery and stuff, that it really wasn't a promotional thing for us, advertising things, and that we were really providing a service and in that sense, we're cooperating with this good will that was being put out. The discussion got real rigid for awhile about this. James Drinkwater had written something about this. He said if you really get down to it, when we drive down a city highway to a meeting, are we really accepting outside contributions. You can get that nit-picky about it.

Greg P.: I really disagree with the idea that our groups are never self-supporting. The tradition talks about an N.A. group. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting. I think our service structure is nowhere near self-supporting. I don't think it ever has been. I think that's one of the

clear statements that separates the service structure from the fellowship as such from the groups. I think there's a major difference. We're getting into those traditions that talk about those, but the 7th is one of those that is fully self-supporting. I think that our service structure is where this deviation from the idea of self-sacrificing internal support comes in. I think most of our groups are pretty much self-supporting. Most of our groups. I just had to say that because I really disagree. It's our service structure that isn't self-supporting. It's our conventions. It's our service boards and committees--all those things.

Tom: If all those things are represented by the group representatives, and they make the decisions for the budget for these things, and they don't support that budget, they may not be self-supporting. That's my way of looking at it.

New speaker: For many years I described this tradition as self-supporting through our own contributions and it was pointed out to me that what it says is declining outside contributions. There's other things that go on other than people putting money in the basket that allows money to flow into our fellowship. Fifty percent of our literature is sold to these other organizations ... When somebody purchases something that N.A. produces, that's not a contribution, that's a purchase of some sort, but I guess that's okay. I think one of the things that ... is the issue of accountability, that when you say that you are entirely accountable to groups and when they don't send enough money up to support the services, you assume that that is how it is mandated for you to go and get the money from some place else rather than them saying in some way, we don't value what you're doing enough to be able to generate this kind of support and I think sometimes we get in trouble that way. What we really need is another dance, but we need seed money for that and I'm sure that the groups would want it if we were to ask them. So we'll just start having these car washes and things like that. I think we bypass something. The other thing that has come up for us locally is that when they made that change as far as radio stations giving out free time is that they considered it a contribution. They took it off their income tax. They're saying they are giving us a donation. We had to have a nonprofit number and we begged, borrowed and stole from somebody because it was not our area's nonprofit number and we got into a little bit of hassle. Somebody said well we can't make them abide by it. If they call it contributions, that's up to them, but that's not the way we see it. It's sticky stuff.

KIM: I just want to say that I don't believe that there is just one way, that baskets are the only one. I don't think that money that there is clean, this kind of clean money, dirty money stuff around--there is this division that money generated by conventions is somehow, even though it comes out of the pockets of that, as far as I know, we don't go around corporations to get

donations to run our conventions. The money comes out of the pockets of recovering addicts. Now the fact is that I really question that that's where we choose to spend most of our money on the party thing is neither here nor there, but that still comes from our membership and I hear this division a lot and I just don't agree with it. I think it's something we need to look at and talk about, but I don't see that as not being self-supporting. If a convention pays for itself and generates money from the region in which the people who attended it are primarily the members of Narcotics Anonymous, that to me is self-supporting. That's all.

Donna Markus: I would just highlight the point made earlier about self-supporting being through one's contributions, and I don't just mean in exchange for rent, but that we pay attention to how much we let one person or a number of people take responsibility for providing services and, thereby placing excessive burden on them, but also take away from that spiritual aspect of serving and allowing others to serve and providing opportunities for newer people to serve as well. There are several levels to it. I think it's an important point, aspect of being fully self-supporting through, collectively, our own contributions.

Bob: I don't really have much. The thought that I had was that the groups are perhaps a reflection of our own change of value and attitudes. One of things that happens for most of us in our recovery is we seek to be less dependent upon others. We seek to stand more on our own two feet with the help of the fellowship. We seek to become more self-sufficient and less leeches physically, emotionally and spiritually. And that's reflected on groups, that just as we as individuals stop using and abusing and leaching off society, so we as collectively within our groups don't look within ourselves _____ our being, and that's in autonomy.

Another voice: I would like to underscore the same situation in 6 and 7. I think the word "ought" was very carefully chosen. It's not a mandatory word. It's an optional word. I think the people who wrote this, their intent was that it's a goal, it's not a rule and it's not a law. The word "ought to be" must be treated very sensitively because I think there are places where it's just not going to be possible for a group to be self-supporting and I don't think a group should feel less than because they are not self-supporting. I think they should be made to feel that they are a group, that they are doing what they need to do, that they carry the message and that, especially again in the foreign area, I could see a great deal of problems and a great deal of sensitivity and if we don't treat this with some loving kindness, we are liable to make a group feel less than they are. I like the word "ought" to be. So I would underscore that the word "ought" to be is in here and it's not a mandatory kind of thing.

New speaker: The meeting places pay rent and places where they are paying rent start jerking them around. They seem to feel far more comfortable saying they pay rent for this room at this time, do not cancel us with no notice. The meetings are getting it for free. I see them over and over again being pushed, outweighing people that are paying the full amount, paying more and they eventually move ...

Another voice: One of the symptoms of our disease is that we fail to accept ... and I think we need to tie that in when we talk about this tradition. I'm thinking of what were some of the ties that bind us together in the beginning of our recovery process when we didn't have a lot of money. It was struggling together. There is a gain that comes from sharing a difficult experience with somebody else when you all have to pull together and today, it just seems a lot easier and I think that there is something that's lost by that. The other thing that this gives us an opportunity to talk about is the pamphlet "Hey! What's the Basket For?" Maybe we might want to talk about that in this tradition, talk about fund flow. I don't know. I'm just throwing that one out there. This might require some discussion and the last one too. This tradition really lends itself to our 12th step about ... principles, about being self-supporting. It gets us in that mode of contributing and I think that's a principle that we can carry outside of our rooms. It just really lends itself to a lot of growth where people really try to take that personal responsibility and look at it as part of a growth process. That's all.

Another voice: I find something really beautiful in the basket kind of supporting ourselves. I like what Tom was saying about coming to a realization that tossing \$.50 or \$.25 in the basket and being called self-supporting--I would hope that we would address that here because the other side of that is well if we can't support ourselves from the basket, we wind up supporting ourselves through events that literature sells. It just doesn't feel as spiritual supporting ourselves in the sale of literature of events and activities like we do That's what we evolve to. I think that the way we can evolve away from that is if we start talking about how do we support ourselves? What is it for? What does it entail? Responsibility there. Those are the kinds of things I'd like to see discussed.

Tom: That's the ideal. It's not reality, but it is the ideal--to be fully self-supporting through our own contributions which is simply to look at through what we put in the basket. It's already happened quite a few times just in this country for conventions that lost a lot of money and ... I don't feel like that is intentional to begin with. These things--conventions, fundraisers, ... developed long after this initial tradition was developed. It's like the reliance was basically other than what they relied on with their literature sales and stuff. ... but the thing that I'm really concerned about is the other type of fundraiser. I'm not against them. I just feel like they are a false sense of

security and if you put too much reliance on them, it really has an effect on our services that we provide. The other thing that needs to be talked about in these traditions, the whole fund-flow system. ... They put on some kind of fundraiser and all of a sudden, they have \$3,000. Then they go nuts. Fighting, choking, etc. Money always seems to do something to those addicts. ... We finally got money. Now we can really plan, ... But that's a healthy part of growth process and I understand, but it's just interesting what it brings out--the power, the controlling and the real power players come right out. Then, of course, the real insecurity that comes along with that. We've seen it where treasurers get off for thousands and thousands of dollars every year. Because there are large sums of money being held year after year, even groups _____. The wisdom behind prudent reserve, to have almost never accumulate great funds because it protects us from ourselves and protects us from all the ... that could be generated. To me there is a real spiritual principle that we just accept amongst ourselves. We'll have these kinds of problems always.

Female speaker: The only thing that I was thinking about was that outside contributions are not just funds. I believe that, and some of us talking about treatment centers and things like that endorsing us--should that be considered a contribution? I know for me at least, it doesn't mean just money. It doesn't say outside of funds, there are these contributions. I would like to look at defining contributions.

Male: I think that self-support is a form of taking action in our own recovery. I see us too often again relying on the committees who rely on the entertainment committee or the committee that's having a raffle or something. I think what we can use is a little of first hand knowledge of our own self-support or the principle behind it anyway and I think we used to be self-supporting somebody else wound up giving. Nobody else knew anything about it. That was probably more by design than the other, but until we had some services to offer out of the book, literature--we started having conventions...I guess that was the beginning of that. One thing that happened a couple of years ago, I had a friend that I did work for, a customer, and I let people know who I am and what I am, and after awhile--this happened a couple of times in a very short period of time. Some people wanted to know how they could contribute. They weren't talking about \$10. They were talking about giving to this program and my reaction was kind of a knee jerk thing--well, we're self-supporting by our own contributions. It's like arrogance of self-support that made me stop and think. I really had to say that in a kind of exacting way and explain why, not just ..., which is a reflection on what happens at our meetings. We're going to have our 7th Tradition as the extreme of it. Nobody knows what it means.
(END OF SIDE 1)

Steve: When you are talking self-support, there's a lot of different kinds of self-support, but the bottom line is that we pay our own way regardless of whether I support a meeting with my presence, with my help in cleaning up and scraping down or painting the room to help pay for it, the bottom line is monetary. It's paying your own way, but I agree there's other forms. I don't want to drift too far from the bottom line. I really feel like we got in some kind of cycle and I don't know whether we are ever going to break it, of relying on something other than our contributions. ... "Where does the fund-flow go?" The discussion of accountability in this tradition.

Danette: I was going to bring up accountability also. I think one of the first things that Kim mentioned was spirit. To emphasize the spirit of self-support. Although I agree with Steve, but yes, bottom line is money. When I first got here, to kind of draw a parallel, the only thing I could relate to in talking about practicing some kind of different behavior, new behavior, healthier behavior, positive behavior was real black and white. You don't whine, you don't steal and you don't cheat. You know--those kind of things. It's always easiest to relate on that level. I don't care how much time you have clean. That's the easiest way to relate. Those are black and white bottom line issues. And money, that dollar sign, is what is easiest to really draw someone's attention to. And, I know that there is a lot broader way to apply that today, that I, and I think each of us, makes their own decision as we go along of how am I supporting, am I helping the group to be self-supporting in my attendance, in sharing the information that I have come to understand as valid, to be self-supporting is not just about money, and when am I doing too much--the other side of that. That's more difficult because of the tendency to want to be acknowledged and be appreciated and be a martyr too. I spend a lot of time doing that. I'm thinking that that was going to be my whole identity here. There's a whole lot involved with that in coming to understand for each of us where we're going to draw our boundaries and how we're going to represent that in a group setting because that information we present and that example that we set is what gives other people their information about what self-support really means to the group. And I think if we somehow stay with the spirit, we will prevent ourselves from getting caught up in those silly P.I. We got so carried away in some of those P.I. things. I mean I know I was involved with P.I., it was insane, it was crazy to try to decide how much would we have paid and how much wouldn't we have and who's giving this and you know--all of this. It got crazy and I was right in there with it. I was crazy with it--I thought that there was going to be an answer. A black and white answer. Well, we can accept this or we can't accept this and if somebody else would have paid this much, then we should pay this. No, it doesn't work that way, I don't think--anymore. The thing about outside contributions, I really like the points that Craig made too, all the points. Outside contributions--I'm not sure, maybe I missed this--other than being dollar amounts that what about those people organizations who

really want to become involved. They really want to support those in other ways. They want to get in there and give time and energy, whether it be through public awareness campaign to do something with our groups to help support them, and I don't know--I've never really thought about it that much--it just came to my mind that whether that's something that might need to be discussed there at all. That's it.

Jack: One of the things that came up, took 7 traditions for it to come up, was the word "ideal." I wonder if that doesn't apply to all the traditions. If these are ideals that we ought to live up to, to strive to live up to, but can't always meet, which is probably why--I think we all know that--and have experienced not being able to quite live up to it as much as we would like to at various times, which is probably why the term "violation of tradition" disturbs many of us the way that it's used. So, these are ideals that you can live up to the best that we can live up to them at any different time, hopefully like applying the steps. We can progressively get better at meeting the ideal. The other thing that occurred to me in relation to this tradition itself is that communication becomes very important. My observation has been that when we look at that pure form of self-support, the dollar going in the basket, the money getting passed on through the service structure--all of that, that if communication were better, that would be better. There would be more responsiveness to me and I truly believe that any need that truly exists will be met by the fellowship. The problem is that they rarely know that there is a need. I know how I have been effected sitting in meetings. You know I have a pat amount that I give to meetings and there are times when I see the basket going around, I already have it ready to put in. And occasionally there, I've noticed that when the treasurer's report is given and some need of that group is expressed, financial need, whatever it is, that indicates that there might be more than normal amount of money needed, I increase what I put in the basket and my guess is that I am not the only one in that room that does that, so communication becomes an important resource that isn't utilized that well. The other thing that occurred to me (Steve and I joked about it yesterday and I certainly joked about it before in the last year or two with all the work that's gone into the Steps and Traditions Book) is that perhaps the best piece of literature that we have on the Steps and Traditions is the little White Book because anything beyond that we have complicated the ... out of it and again as Steve was talking, it occurred to me that the more we try to resolve these problems, the more of the box we're are going to box ourselves into because then we take those interpretations to those situations as being literally the translation of the tradition and, therefore, the flexibility of being able to meet our self-sufficiency as best as we are capable of because there's no way any group of people, including the entire fellowship as it exists today who can write a document that will cover every possible situation that another group may come up against. Because I've experienced it. But wait a minute, you know we have this problem in our region and I

never thought of it like that before. I never realized anybody would have a problem like that before. And certainly with the expansion as it has been pointed out, with growth of groups and other countries where the availability of meeting places is not what we are used to. When we went to Israel last year, most meetings are held in bomb shelters which are held in communities where there is little or no parking available at all, which when you start bringing large groups of people into a community and they start parking all over the streets, they're infringing on the neighbors parking and we're not always very thoughtful, so we not only infringe on their parking space, but probably park in their driveways which literally what was happening was this community will get outraged and speaking up and complaining and groups were not able to stay anywhere very long because they didn't have a place to park. Eventually City Hall gave them a place to meet. I don't remember whether or not they were paying rent. But even that obviously created a problem. The point is that as many things that are going to occur, they definitely don't have the availability of places like we are used to having for meetings and I'm sure that's going to happen in many places. It happens here in different places in the U.S. in small communities that don't have lots of treatment centers, churches, synagogues, community centers. I think the point also needs to be emphasized that (as has been pointed out) that where there are finances that aren't available, there's other ways to be self-sufficient and there's ways to pay our way.

Greg: Something that hasn't been talked about regarding the 7th Tradition that may be a real important part of it is that interpretation of participation of the 7th Tradition is one of the ways that we really feel like we are a part of the group,... is by contributing to our 7th Tradition. Passing the basket provides the opportunity for autonomous donation and an expression of selfless gratitude. That's another aspect of ... benefit to the individual, the opportunity to be a part of participation. ...

TRADITION EIGHT

Greg: I in fact wrote down what I think is a pretty good title. A trusted servant provides services as an extension of the seventh tradition. His or her service is a gift. A special worker provides service as a responsibility for which they receive tangible goods or money in exchange of service for remuneration. The thing I usually focus on when I talk about the Eight Tradition is non-professionalism and how that relates to anonymity. If we take a look at anonymity as being lack of specialness, being the same, lack of distinguishing characteristics. A professional is almost the antithesis of someone who is anonymous. A professional is someone with special talents and abilities. Usually for which they get paid, but none-the-less, someone with special abilities and talents. In order to maintain anonymity as the

spiritual foundation, we can't have that kind of professionals in our meetings, in our fellowship, as such. The idea that we have a special class of members is really something that is very contradictory, or an elite class or a special group, or a more highly trained group of members. We believe that God works through people and the newcomer has something to offer. It is really contradictory to what we as a fellowship have stood for all the way through. As a fellowship we believe there is not a special class of members as we are equal in our membership. That is what I usually start talking about when I start talking about Tradition Eight.

Mitch: I think this has a tie in with Nine in terms of the difference between service centers and committees and boards. Whether we are going to make a distinguishing statement between them and professionalism.

Bob M.: What I talk about when I talk about this tradition is that service is an avocation rather than a vocation. Some people try to make service their life's work, rather than just an extension of their recovery. Sometimes, as we saw here with this committee, we ask a member to contribute professional services for nothing. It sets a bad precedence when we ask people to do those things for us. Like this committee ran into this problem. We were starting to ask for amounts of time and services, that in essence, could make his life unmanageable. That area needs to be addressed, in terms of personal cost. The other part of that is when we have funds, and I think that when they wrote these traditions, they were beginning to realize that we would have the funds. It's easy to buy services. We were talking about people who leave our fellowship at four and five years, because at four and five years, people start to look at you as a "old-timer" or somebody who has something, and then people in the fellowship start putting expectations on you. But if they go to another fellowship often they don't have to make those kinds of sacrifices. So, as we get money we want to make sure that we don't just hire people to do for us. That we haven't gotten to that stage where we can hire personal servants. We need to continue to stay at a level where we are contributing, that we are not looking for people to do for us, now that we have a lot of money coming in from sales of literature. That we now want to buy things and have things done for us that we used to do for ourselves. I think that this is a tradition that deals with that. I don't know how to specifically define special worker either. I think that we have special workers who can do that for us. The most common thing, if you will read this is that they are tied to our service centers. If they work at a service center, then they are a special worker.

Donna: Well I don't talk about this tradition, but in thinking about it, I wanted to comment on something that Greg said, something about having special members or special status about members. One of the comments I wanted to make about that is that when we are talking about special

workers, we aren't talking about their status as members of N.A.. We are hopefully talking about the different realm of their participation in the program of N.A., not about their participation as members in recovery. I think that we sometimes blur that distinction. When we talk about them as special workers we set up divisions. Part of my understanding of nonprofessional is that we don't professionalize the treatment of people, of addicts, in recovery. It's not that we don't provide some professional services that need to be professionalized, it's about making recovery possible to other. We absolutely don't professionalize the delivery of recovery. I don't think we talk about that very often. We get lost in the definitions of what it means to be a professional or a non-professional. It follows the seventh tradition, the point that Kim made at the very beginning of the discussion, about there is a limit to how much a person can give. As we grow, and move beyond being just a grass roots fellowship, we could support the services that we are trying to provide, and we could provide the kind of manpower for our services that we are trying to provide, then we have needed to employ people to do some of that which we can no longer do ourselves to the level that we appear to want to do it. I think we could pare down what we try to do. I think we would end up feeling the "want to do" so we end up professionalizing our service centers in part so we can maintain that distinction of being a regular old member in recovery.

Kim: That distinction of non-professional, and that distinction of twelfth step work as Donna was pointing out of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers and that spiritual awakening part, that is forever non-professional. I do not believe that service centers should be in the business of twelfth step work. But those service centers also need to provide services that enable that message to be carried. For N.A.. unity, when the fellowship has grown to the size we have, we are clearly going to need the communication that volunteers are not going to be able to provide. So we have service centers. A special worker is an employee, it says that there are employed. It is real direct. That is exactly who special workers are. And trusted servants are not special workers... are not special workers. Trusted servants, I believe, are part of our service structure that has to do with delivering that Twelve Step, non-professional recovery message. Then if we need professional services then our service centers, that's what they are there for, to hire that work done. But when we cross that line, problems happen, feelings get hurt, things get mixed up when people start to become professional trusted servants or start to exchange things that they need to do for a living to support themselves in an extensive way, things happen. It's inevitable. Which goes back to that self supporting stuff. Fine, if our fellowship is self supporting, then if we are supporting our services to the point that we can afford to hire people to do then work, then there is work that needs to be done. I do think that as our fellowship has grown that clearly there are things that we used to do on a volunteer basis that are out

of the realm of possibility to effectively do now, that we need to hire people to do it. We need to hire people to run service centers, to help with our communication process, and to deliver material, literature, etc., to the areas, regions and groups. I think those special workers can be incredibly gifted people who can provide a lot of wonderful guidance for our fellowship, but I do not believe they are our leaders. I don't believe those people, they may in fact in another part of their service work, as N.A.. members be leaders. But as special workers, I don't believe that hired, employed people should be providing the decision making leadership for this fellowship. I think that is mixing something up that will never work. It will always put those people in a position of trying to maintain spiritual principles around what is paying their rent and buying food. I just don't know how to be as clear about it as I feel inside. I believe that we have a responsibility, through our service structure, through our leaders who are elected through the due process to be directly responsible to the ones they serve to oversee the work of N.A.. That direct link of responsibility needs to be very direct to those they serve, and to those they serve in our fellowship. I think that is not happening today at the world level, and I think it is not happening because things weren't getting done and special workers ended up doing things that weren't getting done, that wasn't being taken care of through the boards and committees. We got off track and now it's time to get back on the tracks. Special workers, an employed person works for somebody. They work for N.A., and they work for this fellowship. What gets done by those service centers should be determined by the service boards that are directly responsible to those they serve. I'm not fuzzy about the distinction. I'm real clear about it. I think we need all of it. It's not about one being more valuable than the other, I think it is about accountability that is so mandatory to keep us on track. That ultimate authority works through that group conscience. If we short circuit it, then it stops working.

Jack: One of the things that occurs to me is that throughout the day and the night, a number of times we have reflected feeling a sense of loss that sounds to me like there is some question behind it. Questioning whether it is really progress or not. That is in line with the twelfth step work that a lot of us used to be involved in in a different way than we are now, because the service boards and committees have taken on that task in some way, shape or form, so that the process of twelfth step work has certainly changed. I guess having expressed that same issue before, is that positive or negative, or is it just a reaction to change. I kind of used to like doing that and now, it is unfortunate that the members coming in today don't have that same opportunity that some of us did. It occurred to me that we are in the process of eliminating additional things, because now we have money that we didn't used to have, and if we continue to have money, then what about two or three years from now, the people who will be replacing us, will they get paid? At one point, some of you would have only been here if you paid for it out of

your own pocket. So where are we going with this? In five years will you not only have your travel, room and board taken care of, but will you go home with a paycheck? How much are we currently placing on special workers that perhaps we should be doing? And will we not have the capabilities to look ahead and say "wait a minute, we are jumping into something that perhaps we shouldn't?" You know, I don't have an answer. These are just questions that occurred to me, that it's easy to look back and say "gee, how did that happen? I used to enjoy doing that, we got a lot of benefit from that, but now that is not available to our members anymore because we pay people to do that now." I don't know if we have crossed the line yet, I really don't know that. But where is it going to be five years from now, ten years from now, are we going to cross that line of paying people for those things that should be services.

Becky: Well, if everyone else is clear on the differentiation, I'm not. Being a part of the Ad Hoc on N.A.. Service just for the last year, I'm glad I wasn't part of the years of discussion that led to the draft that was released at the conference last year. One year was enough. This is an issue that I have never heard discussed in a sane, reasonable fashion that I can say I have come to any kind of a decision. I don't believe that we communicated well. I know that people defended their positions and felt very strongly about it. Part of it for me is how you define leader. I have a hard time believing that I can blanketly say our leaders are not special workers. I believe that we have leaders in our fellowship who receive a paycheck from the WSO. Whether I like that or not is my own personal preference, but I believe they lead our fellowship. I have some real questions about how we come to some comfortableness about this issue. I don't believe that I have an answer, and I don't believe today or even in Alb., that saying a trusted servant is a trusted servant and a special worker is a special worker solved anything. It didn't mean that principally we didn't know how to apply ideas or attitudes towards those two groups of people. Some of the questions that Jack raised, I don't know, I don't have an answer. I think it will take lots of discussion, at least for me. I don't know if I haven't come to a comfortable place with that yet, or if we as a fellowship have not had enough experience and maturity to make that decision. I'm not even sure that all that discussion is inherent in this tradition but this tradition gets bantered around and combined with others and really used as a club. So, I'm not comfortable how we as a fellowship have come to terms with this issue.

Hollie: This is obviously a real emotional issue for me, because I am one of those people. To me, I think this tradition is divided into two parts. One of them is that N.A.. should remain always non-professional which means that we don't charge for our service, we don't provide counseling, housing, shelter, detoxification. We are not a professional organization. But then we do have to have some people, especially since we have grown so much, that can

provide some of the services that our volunteers are not able to take care of. We were just talking earlier about some of the international stuff. If I were to send out all of the international stuff we receive in the office to all the trustees so we could come up with responses, I would be sending out a large package every week, of the things we get; the group registrations, the questions, concerns, professional requests, all the things we get in the office. I'm not saying that I don't think the volunteer couldn't take care of that stuff, but hopefully by the time you reach a level of service in this program that we are at right here in this room, you are going to have a life outside of N.A.. A family, a job that doesn't give you forty hours a week to spend taking care of reading and responding to the things that we get at the office. Somebody said something earlier about special workers being able to be of service in the area where they live, but I'm sorry y'all, I can't do that out here because special workers are different. As soon as someone finds out I work at the office, I'm not a regular N.A.. member anymore. Sorry! I can't even go to an area meeting and talk about what I know from my experience because people discount that because I work at the office. I'm different. People see me different, they treat me different, they look at me different and what I say is not heard the same way as somebody else says it. I'm sorry, but we're not the same. People told me that before I came to work out here but I didn't believe them. No, that's not true! But it is. Special workers are not trusted servants, in that way. Thank God, but the WSO has a pretty strict hiring policy. They don't just hire people off the streets. I sent in my application months before I heard anything. They go through a long process to get people because the BOD wants the best people possible to work here to provide services for the fellowship. They look at a lot of stuff. Not just that this person put in an application, but that this person has the experience, and they have the love for the fellowship that they are going to need to be able to work here. If I didn't love this fellowship, I wouldn't be here. We don't get a whole hell of a lot of compensation for what we do, believe it or not. The time and the effort and the hours that I spend here, on the way to work, at home and the sleep that I lose before every Trustee meeting is incredible because I am trying to make sure that I provide the best services possible by being a special worker. That may sound kind of contradictory, but it is true. Being in a position like this is difficult because we are considered to be so different from a regular member. The only position I hold, if you can even consider it a position, is because I live in such a small community that nobody will come to meetings so I am the general all-purpose trusted servant at a meeting, because we can't get anyone else to serve. I can't do anything else because I'm different. I was reading something this week, and we were talking about it at work, about one of the regional service office bylaws, that makes their special workers sign a contract stating that they will not hold any service position anywhere, not group, area or regional. They are not considered OK to do that because they are being paid, so that makes them different. Being paid has not taken away my love for this fellowship, it has

not taken away my commitment to recovery. It just means I get a paycheck for putting in forty hour of work that I used to neglect being able to do because I didn't have the time, and I was too tired to do it after working forty hours a week. I don't know if any of that has made any sense, but it sure felt good to say it.

Steve S.: It is such a defensive thing. Every time I get into this discussion, you just end up getting defensive. Having done this for almost five years, each year I have different views and a different philosophy for myself. I don't know if I'm too close to it. So I save it for backroom discussions. You kind of go through a transition being a special worker, and I think everyone who works at our office goes through it. Maybe I'm in a different place than some others. Generally speaking, I've come to the place where I think there are categories of service, and special worker is one, without question. I can't see it the same as being a trusted servant. It's a different category. My job loyalty is to the WSO. I try to do a good job so I'll keep getting my paycheck. The fact is that I subscribe to the same values that you do as a member. Now I'm not talking about a non-addict special worker. So I'm as vulnerable to corruption in my job, as you are in yours. And that is where the lines cross and the defensiveness comes in. When I'm questioned, I get defensive since I have pride in my job. And I will get defensive about ... implying that there isn't a gift of gratitude involved just because I get paid. I have the same personal values of recovery that you have in your job. we are really equally as vulnerable to straying from that ... more on this later. And also I see our phone answering services as a special worker of sorts. If a committee hooks up their phone line through an answering service, that's a special worker still, even though it's not high profile like in a service office. I think we use that all over. I guess maybe if I'm ever able to step back and look at it, we're just getting more experience at it. In terms of the tradition and what a special worker is, it's really pretty clear. The role of special workers is where we get all fouled up. The discussion always goes like this; first people kind of threaten the integrity of each other, then the rest of the discussion is trying to make each other feel good, like I didn't mean to impugn your integrity because I like you, and you are valuable. It's hard to be in the role of special worker. When I started work I joined the back room discussions, like well we get all the communications, we hear from the fellowship, we should be involved in the conference, voting, whatever. It felt great, like yeah! We should be more important than we are. The longer I'm doing this, the less I would want to be more important or vote, personally. I don't think the majority of special workers would agree with this, but personally I now have no desire to be involved in voting on committees or at the WSC. My real focus is to do a good job at work, because I believe the WSO is doing a good job for the fellowship. If I'm ever in the position where I am asked to do something as a special worker that goes against my values, then I have a real personal problem. That hasn't happened. The other thing

is the pride in that work is what leads to this defensiveness, and if on occasion a co-worker does less than a good job, I take it personally. That happens, and I do that too. And others take that personally. I don't know what value it has because everyone I see discuss it, it gets to be a personal thing. I think the real problem area is the role of special workers. As far as the tradition goes, it is real clear. Even that stuff that I was reading that Bill wrote, when he was talking about that, what it said in several of those articles was that we can hire people to be our cooks, janitors, secretaries, etc. and if we don't need their services, then we can discard them. I think that is still true today. If the services the WSO does, publishing, distributing, and all the other stuff, well if you don't need what I do, or if I get out of line, well then through the BOD or the WSC, you will discard those services and maintain what serves the fellowship. That is how it should be. I think the tradition is clear but the personal roles are what make it hard to talk about, or write about. I've sat down to write input for that (ad-hoc committee on N.A. service) several times but found that it was just defensive, personal stuff and I threw it all away. The only thing I know is my personal experience and I'm not sure that would have application to the philosophy of the fellowship.

Donna: I don't think I have much to add, but it's hard just to gloss over this so I'm going to add just a little bit because I do agree with Steve that is it more our application of this in the tradition that is much more troublesome than the tradition itself. It somehow ends up having such an emotional charge. When I first spoke to this I was trying to speak to the dilemma that you find yourself in which you expressed so differently than I did because you feel it so much more. The kind of distinction that gets drawn between a special worker and a member of N.A. and the ability to just be another member. I think that trusted servants at some levels experience that too, but not nearly with the kind of hands-off connotation. There is still that negativeness. I have to agree with one of the points that Jack made, about "gee, how much of this is progress and how much have we evolved to a point where we are taking away the obligation, the privilege, to perform the kind of service that benefits us individually." I think maybe there is some fear in there, and some envy or jealousy that other get to do it, and all of those feelings get tangled up and create the kind of controversy that surrounds the role of a special worker. I'm less fuzzy about the points that were brought up earlier. Kim talked about where leadership and decision making comes from, and that directly responsible to. I think that kind of stuff is much clearer. We still have a lot of reconciling. For me as a member of this committee, its going to be a lot more difficult with this tradition, because it is currently a hot issue in the fellowship. It reminds me of what Tom was talking about, when I was looking at input for the traditions, and clubhouses, cooperation, not affiliation, the sixth tradition was the issue of the day. So I'm listening

carefully as we go around the rest of the room.. I don't think we will be able to reconcile it yet.

Greg: My job requires me to do certain things which are very similar to what I do as an N.A. member. I'm a counselor and I work with newcomers on a daily basis. There are some very close similarities and some very noticeable differences. One of the things that has been imperative for me, and there are several of us in this room, who are in that same situation. And I think it is fairly close to being a special worker. There are some overtones to being employed by a service center of N.A. and that makes some difference. But there are some things that are very reminiscent about being a health professional in this fellowship. Something I have found essential is to keep a degree of separation between my job, my personal program of recovery and my service. For me, the way I express that is that one is part of my job and one is a gift. Part of what I opened this one for is as an expression of that in my life. We might want to develop those themes about the similarities of a special worker for a service center and people who do things in their lives, such as counselors and health professionals, and lawyers in our fellowship, and all of the helping professions. That might be a good way to get some of the emotionalism out of the discussion. I heard an interesting suggestion recently that perhaps our service centers should never employ N.A. members as special workers. I personally don't think it should make too much difference but it is an interesting suggestion. It would certainly never put anyone in the position in which Hollie and Steve are in right now, which might be a real gift. There certainly wouldn't be this confusion between a trusted servant and a special worker. So, it is an interesting thought. I don't know that we should ever do that because there are some functions which require the experience that perhaps only a member can give, but the thought is very interesting. See I think that membership in N.A. should have no relevance to an employee of a service center of N.A. The relevance of a special worker are their talents, and abilities and what they have to offer to the service center and it should have nothing beyond that. I know it is a tough one. I know I have felt the same way when someone has said "oh, you're a counselor." There have been questions about whether anyone who works in the field should be a member of the Board of Trustees and it was suggested that "perhaps not, no one who is a member of a health profession should be a member because it is a conflict of interest." That is our history. I don't think that is so different. It still comes up. Maybe we can gear it this way and take it a little off of the emotional side of it.

Stretch: I have a great many problems with Tradition Eight. I seem to be able to objectively look at each of the traditions and get some sense of what they are about. I'm glad to see that I'm not the only one wrestling with this tradition. I get a different sense. I don't think that the problem is the special workers. I think the problem is the lack of definition of service centers. I

think the confusion lies not in the special worker. Who is a service center? What is a service center? What services should a service center provide? How much control should the service center have over N.A.? That is the question. Not the special worker. If we could define the role of the service center we have no problem. The special worker should not be a second class citizen. They should be special. That's why it says special. I don't know why they are defensive. I think they do a tremendous job. I think they are special. The reason they are defensive is because there is a problem in the fellowship between N.A. and the service center, and we haven't pinpointed the problem. I really feel strongly that this is the confusion. I spent almost the whole year sitting here, and I didn't understand there was a problem. It has taken me a year to come to some sort of an understanding that a problem exists. The problem that exists, and I went to two Alb. meetings and the issue I heard was "special workers this and special workers that" and I really thought that was the problem. I heard a lot of confusion and I understand that confusion. The line is drawn in the wrong place. The place that we drew the line was at the difference between special worker and trusted servant. I don't find that the right place to draw the line. Service centers can hire non-addicts, service centers do hire non-addicts. Service centers hire lawyers, CPA's. Those are special workers. The non-professionalism that the tradition talks about is the fact that we don't want lawyers, CPA's, doctors, counselors, and other professionals running N.A. and doing the work in N.A. But it doesn't say that we shouldn't use professionals. It doesn't say that we shouldn't get professional opinions. I'm glad that Hollie and Steve spoke up. I can understand their confusion. And I can understand how they can feel less than, instead of more than because I think that they take the brunt of the problem between the BOT, the fellowship and the service center. And they are professionally defending that element of the service structure. I think we need to be real clear about what the role of the service center is. If you guys have the guts, this is the place to do it. I don't find in any of the traditions a definition of a service center. How much services are they to provide, are they supposed to be the 12 Step portion of the fellowship? Are they supposed to be out there rendering the services that the BOT are supposed to take care of? Are they doing the work of the Board of Trustees are doing, are they doing some of the work or are they doing all of the work? Maybe if we have enough service centers then we won't need the BOT or the BOD if we empower them to run the fellowship. And this is where a tremendous distinction has been made.

Craig: I respond with less passion to this issue than I did at one time. Some of it might be because of a different attitude in the fellowship and some of it might be because my attitude is different. I know that if I went into meetings in my area wearing a tie, I get a certain response. It seems to me that place we talk about creed, religion, lack of religion, sexual identity, we need to add professional or non-professional. People can get ashamed of the

fact that they still own a house, that they didn't lose it. That somehow they are less than or inferior because they held on to their house. Maybe this is a place to deal with some of those kind of prejudices, maybe not all of them but some. We can address them. Dual relationships are difficult. It gets very confusing when I know someone in N.A. and then I see them in some other setting, I get confused as hell about how I'm supposed to be reacting to them. I don't know that this is the place to deal with that. My guess is that many people who are dealing with a professional who is also an N.A. member makes it more complicated. Like a plumber, do I charge this person less because they are an N.A. member? What if there is a problem with the work and then I have to see them at a meeting? Am I going to deal with that in a different way? What if they call me a crook? How do you deal with those kind of dual relationships. I would also like a little more clarification about service centers. There have been times where I have questioned whether the service centers are outside of N.A., are they inside of N.A., are they entities that we created so they can be attacked but N.A. stays OK? When an area has a phone line--I always thought that a service center was an office, but when someone mentioned phone lines, I thought "well, there is no office outside but the office of that answering service." So, if service centers can do that and hire those people, then maybe service boards and committees can hire people and the office doesn't have to hire everybody. I agree with the statements that in an ideal world, it should not make any difference whether someone is an addict or not an addict. It should be based on their qualifications, on how well they can do the work before them. I know that living in the real world, this doesn't always happen. It causes a lot of pain, and these people can be the victims of a lot of abuse. I just don't want to be a part of that. I can't stop anyone else from doing it.

Bob Mc.: If I had to have open heart surgery, would I put a call out in the fellowship to find another addict who might be willing to do that, or would I look for the person who had the proper qualifications to do that? When we are talking about special workers, we need to focus on their qualifications, and not on whether they are an addict or not. If you are going to take your car to a mechanic, you are going to want to make sure that the guy is a mechanic. Whether he is an addict or not, may or not be a secondary issue. The real issue is when we look in our personal lives for somebody to provide us with a personal service, we look for the person who is best qualified to do that, addict or non-addict. We've got to put our money up and that is part of what we need to look at in our special workers. I know part of what I hear, is that so-and-so is going to come to work for the office. And then the questions of who, what are their qualifications, where are they from, begin. Did they advertise for the job? It's almost like "the fix is in before the job is even advertised." And that gives off a certain connotation. If we talk about what are the qualifications and have some degree of accountability, I think we can eliminate some of that. We really need to focus on the qualifications,

and put out position announcements that are designed so that there can be some measure of objectivity when you look at those people who apply for the position. At some point we could end up with lawsuits for discrimination over some of these. Other than that, I don't want to be a special worker because I don't want to be abused.

Mitch: This is an emotional issue for me too. In my region we have a regional service office. We have one paid full time worker right now. That full time paid worker is also our regional treasurer. She was the regional treasurer before she became a special worker. We discussed the issue based on the experience of the WSO at they don't promote that kind of thing and they have some principles behind that. But the body didn't agree with that. They thought it was fine. I was one of the people who didn't agree because my experience was all with the WSO. I thought maybe we were treading someplace that we shouldn't be treading. But this was over a year ago and there have been no problems. She does her regional stuff at the region and her office stuff at the office. Nobody says "well (when she is selling them literature and they ask her a service question), now you are on paid time." No one makes an issue out of it. It seems we have made the issue here. The responsibility is clear in NY. The paid worker works for the Board that runs the office, and the board is clearly responsible to the region. That was part of the confusion. On the one hand, the obvious overseer of the office is the region yet you are sitting on the region as the treasurer. On the other side, you are the employee. I wonder if that is part of what we get into as special workers being N.A. members. It doesn't say anything here about special worker being either members or non-members. And when they are N.A. members, they are basically working for themselves. One the one hand you are doing a job for an employer. On the other hand you have a right as an N.A. member to be the employer. Because we all employ our workers through our trusted servant election process. So, I understand if I was in that position, I would have just as much emotionalism coming up about the issue. And, you know what, earlier when you mentioned the letter from Pakistan the first thing that came in for me was jealousy that I wasn't a part of that. Because that is how I am. I think that comes up a lot. How come you are doing the job, and I'm not? How come my position is one where I have to volunteer my time and you get paid for it. That's what is going on inside for me while we are talking about it. But it is clear what has happened in terms of what has happened back home, in that they are clear in the relationship between the service center and the service structure. That the responsibility is for the service structure to define what the service center is in relation to the service structure. It is something I don't think we have done. We haven't stopped and said "inventory time--let's take a look at this, what is it we want and how can we work towards that?, how did we get here and whose fault is that?" Until we find out how we got here, and we can take that attitude, or we can take the attitude of the reality of where we are.

The service office has elevated itself to the point of doing a lot of the work of the service structure. It is kind of like while we were talking about doing 12 step calls and what went into it, it has been taken away from the volunteer and put in the hands of the paid worker. And the service structure is saying "we are not comfortable with that." Not being a paid worker, I can see that this is what has happened here. I think that is what we have evolved to. I think we need to define the responsibility of the creator of the service center to define the responsibility of the service center. And we need to make it generic to all service centers. We need to have some definition of what are their responsibilities, who is responsible for upkeep of that maintenance. Is it the service structure, the Board that is given that responsibility to directly oversee it, where does that lie? It is clear when the talking with areas and regions, that they want this issue defined. When they started asking me these kinds of questions I had to respond that without the bylaws, I don't know as much as I should. I wonder how many of us do that, put out the bylaws and the other information on the table so we can look at it so we can work it out. I really believe we can work it out. I believe what will happen is all that over the course of time, we will evolve right back to what is happening right now. But we will say it is OK, that now we feel responsible, that the service structure is responsible for it.

Tom: The people we hire, particularly in coordinator positions and stuff, we look for members of our fellowship who are very active in their service and participation in the WSC. We get people who are very highly experienced in service work and then we hire them. Then we say, don't do that, we have you right where we want you, just shut-up and don't do stuff. That's not why we hire them. We hire them because of these attributes about them. Don't we want special workers who have this kind of experience? That is precisely why they are hired, because they are addicts. I feel like when Steve and Hollie were sharing if I have any authority as a Trustee, if any member is being treated as a second class citizen, then that is a massive violation of our traditions. As a trustee, I feel that is ridiculous and I hope we can take some kind of a stand on it. Another thing that is really funny to think about. How many members do we have in N.A. About 3-4 years ago I heard it guessed that we had about 800,000. We are approaching having about 40 members, out of almost 1,000,000 members, who are special workers. There is a lot of fear that has built up around this. Stretch's point is well taken that a lot of it has to do with how we define our service centers. We have been growing at such a rate that it is impossible, and it is no one's fault. It would be a major, major undertaking for anyone to start putting into perspective a definition of the work that is done by our service centers. We are still in such a reactionary mind set about our growth. There has been no master plan, just as there has been no master plan in my recovery.

Nancy: Tradition eight has always been the most obscure one, because I just never realized that there was that much of an issue. A special worker, I always thought, was a janitor, receptionist. I just didn't know that there was that much controversy surrounding the issues. I would think that we would be happy that there are addicts who are willing to come here and work. Why would we not want that? I just don't understand the problem. Why wouldn't we want them to serve as trusted servants. I'm sure as I come around more I will be enlightened. (laughter) I also think that it seems real fragmented. What does the issue of non-professionalism have to do with special workers? It seems there are two totally different thoughts in this tradition. I just think it is very obscure.

Steve: I think it is a very straight forward tradition. It is our interpretation that is screwed. The first part is to warn us against becoming authorities on the subject of alcoholism recovery, originally it was alcoholism and we are using recovery. I have a feeling that the second part was brought about to explain how we were going to be able to hire someone to do our bidding, to do the work that we can't do. About ten years ago we got to the point where we no longer could do what we needed to do with volunteers. Actually, it happened earlier than that but we weren't willing to get anything done. I question what we are getting done now. Not the special workers part, but what we as volunteers are getting done. And that is our history. And that is where the problem comes in. I have to admit that years ago we didn't have literature and during our step study we read out of the 10 x 10. I'm sure that is where I got some of my ideas about the simplicity of this, from a 10 x 10. I think that the problem we are having here is more related to ignorance about the issue. I don't think we are going to come up with an answer. It has to do with communication. Special workers in service. A special worker is an employee, say for the WSO, and they are an employee first. I would hope that when you go to a meeting, a member is a member is a member. Whatever you do for a living doesn't matter. I may have been a part of making up that policy and I don't know what my opinion was then. I certainly do now. I would strongly suggest that someone rethink that policy. Finally, I think the WSC should hear from special workers at the conference. If someone is sitting there and they have the information that 8 other people have stumbled over trying to answer, they should share that information. As far as votes, I don't think that is an issue as they don't need a vote to participate. Let's face it, they are some of our leaders. That is why we hired them. I don't want to spend too much time with this document talking about special workers. After all, if it's only 40 people out of a million or if you've never heard of the issue, why bring it up? It would date the material on the traditions if it is overemphasized. We don't want to make it the focal point of the tradition.

Kim: I still think the tradition is pretty clear. I don't think that special workers have to be addicts. I really encourage special workers who are members of N.A. to refuse to go along with that kind of repression and discrimination. I would encourage anyone who is at a meeting and sees this happening to explore it. I think there is a lot of discrimination in this fellowship. I again think that the problem is that we need to take a look at what the service centers are and that the service centers are created by the service structure. It is an issue of accountability. It is not at all an issue of questioning the integrity or the work of the special workers. It's not about writing all of the letters. It's about what is the direction our fellowship is growing in? Maybe the problem is that the special workers at the WSO have taken over all of the fun work and the rest of us are just sitting around bullshitting and would like to get back some of the real stuff. Sometimes I wonder what I am doing here because it doesn't seem to impact on what happens on a daily basis and how things are responded to at the world level. Now, it is not about taking back into our hands where trusted servants at the world level are doing the copying, etc. But somehow, I feel like I have a responsibility to the conference that elected me to be involved in overall decision making and planning on how the fellowship and world services are functioning. And I don't feel like I am doing that job. I feel like I am being blocked from doing that job. Not on purpose, not me personally, but because of the way we have evolved. That is all I am saying. This is not about trusted servants against special workers. Yes, I was wrong in that statement that special workers don't provide leadership. Leadership can be provided but the overall leadership for the fellowship needs to remain with the WSC or perhaps someone who is given that direct accountability through our service structure. Then we hire people who have leadership qualities to carry out what we want them to do, what the conference wants them to do. Not what they think they should be doing. Those things just don't work and I just believe that we are at that kind of turning point.. I have always wanted the participation of special workers wherever. I have frequently wanted them to vote on things where they didn't want to, because I felt like they were by far the most informed people about what we were dealing with. I want participation. I'm afraid we'll be going into the conference doing that thing of discussing, discussing, discussing and there will be someone who works with it on a daily basis who, it takes an act of God to get them to the microphone to tell us about it. I find that frustrating. I think this gets way too complicated, and the separation of that is unnecessary. We could eliminate a lot of that if we could just get the conference or whatever body, to call it one board that is responsible to the fellowship directing the operation of N.A. I think that would solve a lot of those problems.

Danette: I just wish we could use a term other than special worker, because I feel it just adds to the problem. The first part of this was kind of touched on and, well, all of it is pretty straightforward. About non-professional, it has to

do with the way we conduct our groups, the non-professional treatment that is offered, and that the groups are not professionally led, and all that stuff. Those of us who have served in dual roles, as in the helping profession, the counselor, or whatever other kind, have at times, I think, been very irresponsible in our attitudes about our jobs and how they relate to N.A. and our service in N.A. I know that there are some of us who have actually taken it so far as to only carry a certain amount of the message, and then tell people "you are going to have to make an appointment to come see me and these are my rates." That has done nothing to better our understanding of professionals and special workers. It has added tremendously to the problem we are talking about now. I don't know about the leadership thing and the employee thing. I don't know if that makes a whole lot of difference to me right now. If you have leadership qualities, you have leadership qualities. I really like the idea about using the health care professions or other helping professions if we are going to talk about this issue at all, to talk about it from that point of view diffuses the whole issue and makes a whole lot more sense. I think as far as special workers go, and particularly what we heard from Hollie, well let me back up a little. When I was working at the WSO, well I enjoy what I am doing now a whole lot better, but not for those reasons. There was a transition and a learning process about, oh, some people tend to look at me a little differently. Actually, for the most part what I got and the reason I chose eventually not to ever appear at an area or regional committee meeting was because people gave too much weight to what I said, and I didn't like that. I was not comfortable with that. There was a certain amount of illusory power also in leadership roles that also occurred as part of my position, my paid employee position. I say it was an illusion because nobody listened. Yeah, we may have had great conversations, I may have felt really strongly and I had experience to offer, but I feel like, this is what we need to do for N.A. I have this to offer, this knowledge, this experience as a direct result of my employment, but it never went anywhere, it never accomplished anything, nobody listened too it. It didn't result in anything changing in our service structure or the fellowship. Getting out of that position, and back into an elected trusted servant position, I found out, much to my surprise, that I have much more of a chance to make some real changes. I'm not saying that is good, bad or indifferent. That is just the way it is. That is my experience with that. I don't think that we want our leaders to be paid workers. Like Kim said, we can delegate that responsibility, that authority to the people who have those qualities. I would hate to see us carry this too far. I think it has gotten blown all out of proportion. I think that part of the reason we are seeing this occur with special workers specifically at the WSO, is , one, because we need to define the role of the world service centers and we haven't done that. It's very important for us to look at that and where we have gotten ourselves. I think that there may occur a change in our perception and our attitudes towards special workers according to the specific type of responsibility we give them as paid employees. If our service center is only

going to be carrying out these specific things that are associated with a retail business and clerical, that kind of stuff then we probably won't hear much about what our paid employees do. They are hired, it is very obvious they do this, this, this, and I doubt that anyone is going to have a problem with this. The problem occurs when we see people being extremely involved with the services that are being set out by the WSC. That is something that we just have not given enough consideration to. And if those people are going to be managed and administered by the same group in the same manner as this retail business over here is going to be managed, I think we will continue to have problems. I think this is what we need to look at. Defining what the service center does, how we want it done, who we want to carry out those jobs. I would venture to say that if we really do take some time to get involved in that, that we will find there is a difference here. There is a difference between the people who carry out the requirements of a retail business and the people who carry out the requirements for WSC activities. We will probably desire more involvement by those people. We aren't going to have them relegated to this back seat, we aren't going to be afraid of any power they may have over us, that we will want them more involved. We will also be taking more of a direct, be more directly involved in what they do. I'm not sure how all of that will happen, but I think this is the place to start. I'm not sure that all of that needs to get written about in this tradition but it is something that we need to start investigating and be more responsible for. This is our responsibility, it's not OK to just say "oh, yeah, these poor special workers here experiencing this extreme emotional distress and it's all our fault, because we are just too closed minded and too prejudiced." There is a real problem here, a fundamental structural problem that needs to be addressed. As far as this actual tradition goes, when we start to write about it we need to keep it very basic, very straightforward, and just the way it is.

Jack: One of the things that happened for me as the discussion went on, about halfway, it became real clear to me that the tradition is real simple, and that these problems have nothing to do with the tradition. It seems to me that we have pretty well defined why it talks about professionalism in here, or warns us against professionalism in N.A. I think it very clearly gives us the ability to create service centers and employ special workers. Special workers are employees. To me that is what the eighth tradition is all about. This other discussion is about problems that exist within our service structure, not in the traditions. The solutions have pretty much been discussed on how to get to solving some of the problems. Accountability, responsibility of the boards and committees is the answer. I'm just throwing out figures because we've been doing that, but say we have 50 special workers at one service center. Maybe on evaluation we find that we need 30. Then the appropriate action needs to take place. That's not fun and it's not comfortable and it might be a difficult process as it would be for any business

that undergoes that kind of transition. But that is the kind of responsibility that is necessary and that is one of the areas that I see we are lacking, that we don't have that evaluation process. We don't take the inventory at this level. The experience that Hollie talked about, basically I really, and the one that Mitch threw out, I wonder if the NY regional office decides to hire 9 more employees, if their attitude won't change a little if all of the 9 people turn out to be GSR's of that region. I suspect that they will begin to take a look at it differently. I don't see that the problem that Hollie ran into as even a problem of our service structure. That sounds to me like it is a problem with the attitude of the particular area, because I don't think you would find that in every single area or region, that a special worker would be looked at that way. I know as a trustee, I have dealt with that a lot of times and expect that up front so I stay out of area service meetings. For some of the reasons that Danette expressed first of all. I would rather be able to attend a service meeting and not have some importance placed on what I have to say more than on what the person next to me has to say. That may very well and probably would happen, so I just stay out of those situations. On the other hand, the area where the discussion about whether special workers should be just like any other member in the service structure, and I've heard a lot of discussion that That shouldn't happen, that I still perceive probably should happen. I question whether the special workers in attendance at the WSC should be allowed to be elected as members of the BOT or the BOD. To me that doesn't make sense. I have difficulty understanding how that would be appropriate, and that's all the principles that we talked about, so yeah, at the area level, no problem, at the regional level, it starts to get funny because if they come up to the conference, should they be available and eligible for that? My personal opinion so far has been that I see that as a problem, with a segment of special workers. Not necessarily all of them. The ones who are involved at the conference providing services regularly, I question whether that makes sense. Personally, I think just the same, as I hope any trustee, when they are asked if they would like to accept a nomination to trustee, one of the things that needs to be thought about is "am I willing to give up some of the things that I enjoy doing now, because I am going to have to." That's the responsibility of accepting the position of trustee. I also see that certain things have to be accepted when you become a special worker. I often go back to quite a few years ago, when they were trying to incorporate the BOD and at a convention when we held what we called our conferences at that time, and this is history, the officers of a Board of Directors to incorporate the WSO were elected. That was a whole sham in and of itself, the election process. I was elected as the chairperson of the BOD, and it didn't exist, the Board of Directors. There was no office but our job was to incorporate the office. Now just because I worked for a non-profit organization, somebody assumed that I would know how to incorporate a non-profit organization. Now at that time, I was too new in the non-profit stuff to really know that but I even thought that I

probably could do it. Four of us had a couple of three meetings, and after the couple of three meetings of really learning to do the task that was given to us, we realized we really didn't know what we were doing. That got me involved with the WSO, by taking a responsibility to find out more about what we needed. At that time, Jimmy was sick and Bob B. was handling it. I used to go down there every week and help Bob deal with mail and send out pamphlets, and all that stuff. It was an exciting, fun thing to do. As we tend to do, Bob was handling it all by himself pretty much and now he had someone else helping him, somebody who felt responsible, who thought this was his job, so Bob took advantage and stopped showing up as often as he used to, so pretty soon I was the one doing all this. Then an opportunity came to move the office to someplace less expensive, because we were paying an exorbitant \$50 a month at that time for the office. I was in a dilemma about whether to make the move or not. I talked to Jimmy about it and told him "look, if I do this these people are going to be pissed off over here and if I don't do this, these people are going to be pissed off over here." That's when Jimmy told me, "if you want to be of service, you better get used to people being pissed off at you. If you do one thing, one group of people are going to pat you on the back and the other group will call you an asshole. If you do that thing, then they will be the one's who pat you on the back and another group will call you an asshole. So if you want to be of service, you better get used to that." I think it's the same thing, if you want to be a special worker, you have to get used to being an asshole sometimes, to getting patted on the back and possibly to getting discriminated against, sometimes justly and sometimes unjustly. It sounds like to me what the area service committee did was probably out of line, but at certain levels I support that type of discrimination because I think it just creates conflict. I think we all have to make those decisions of what we are going to give up. And if we make this a point in writing the eighth tradition, it is something that may resolve itself in time so we may be making no sense to make an issue of it in the book. A lot of this is fairly new. I think it is the evolutionary process and the response to growth in certain areas we are still stumbling on. This is all new. We think of N.A. in terms of many, many years but where we are today is still relatively new in our growth and the growth has been very quick. A lot of the accountability requirements that some of us should be more responsible in are very difficult things to do. I think a lot of it is coming to the point where more is becoming apparent to the boards and committees as they are becoming aware that they are not accountable themselves, ourselves. The inventory taking that needs to happen, I just don't think it has happened yet. We talk of the crossover of leadership of trusted servants and special workers and that is not very difficult to see how that happens, especially when we hire people who are leaders in the fellowship. Just because they are no longer holding a position, does that mean they stop being a leader? But now they are hired, so there are a lot of areas that need to be worked out. I think that is happening because people are seeing the need to work them out.

When we become aware of the need to work them out, then we respond to the need. There are just personal issues that we all see and we share. I don't really see that there is a tremendous difference between some of the personal sacrifices (other voice: maybe martyr would be better) that trusted servants and special workers have to make. We all need to be able to learn how to deal with those sacrifices. Steve has been doing it a little longer than Hollie and has learned more how to deal with it. I think we all need to be able to talk about it and to be supportive of one another. And for a very simple tradition we sure spent a hell of a long time talking about it.

TRADITION 9

I think the terminology "as such" has always been a confusing point for many. I think, what I think of with "N.A. as such", is N.A., the program of recovery, the sharing experience, strength and hope, reaching, one hand out, the therapeutic value, all of that is "N.A. as such." Its what we, in recent years, have liked to call the spiritual component of our fellowship, the division from rendering services. And, uh. But, I think that it has created a lot of confusion. So, I don't know if it's something we need to talk about in the text or just sort of ignore and hope that as people read it, they just kind of think, "Isn't that peculiar language?" Isn't it?

But I think that we've already broached this subject in terms of the creation of service boards, the need to provide services that as volunteers we can no longer provide at the level that we want to. So what we've done is create boards and committees to do the work. Yes, well I don't know. I don't know that this, that the ceation of the Ninth Tradition lead to a service structure. Certainly the alcoholic foundation has existed long before the traditions were written. So, I don't think that the tradition was written to create a service structure. I think the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous came before the traditions, at least in some form.

I think it was a way to separate the business of recovery from meetings, from the business of business, provision of services. So that there were separate places for those two ...

The way we are structured with the WSC and the WSO, in an of itself, recognizes that we have a business arm and that we have a spiritual fellowship.

I think that part of the problem we get into is in how we achieve those clear lines of accountability. How do we assure direct responsibility? I'll attempt to bet that that's where clear lines of accountability are and in order for something to be accountable you have to define it, and then you have to be able to put some measure to it. In accounting ... the dollar comes in. You

can follow it through the company and follow where it goes out and you have some process for it.

Part of what I think what happens here is that we, we get into who sets policy and then who does business. Who conducts, you know, who does what. If the WSC chooses, or leaves the fellowship to choose, to really devote ourselves to establishing a policy for the office, to see that the direction of the office follows the spirit of our fellowship and the traditions are followed, then we protect ourselves from having to be involved in the money, the property and the prestige.

We should be, I think, a policy setting board for our service arm and the service arm should be the body that does the actual work. And that there ought to be clear lines, you know, clear statements on how that should function or how that should play out.

... I think our office is our business arm and they should do the business. They should do, I believe, all the business of the fellowship through use of like regional offices, through convention corporations that would handle local and regional conventions. That the fellowships then can devote themselves to the content, to the structure, to the program ...

That requires trust. And the way that I think that you get some trust is to have a mechanism for review periodically, for periodic review, so that there is direct accountability that we talk about.

But there is clearly two separate, distinct functions. That's the setting policy and then the implementation or the actual operations end of it. And I think where the conflict gets in is that the people think that the office sets the policy, rather than the fellowship setting the policy for the office.

I think we need to devote some attention in our materials to the fact that it is our personal responsibility, as individual addicts, to see that N.A. as a whole follows its tradition of principle. And that we set the kinds of policy and establish the kinds of procedures that lets the office do that. That clearly lets the people know what our expectation is or how the WSO will conduct business.

When we were talking earlier about, you had said to Mitchell, well what if you had eight GSRs who wanted that position; they were all addicts. Bottom line ought to boil down to qualifications, not hinge it on the addict. That if its a task that we want done, then it should be the best person who can perform the task.

If being an addict and being involved in our service structure is a qualification, then that should be a qualification. But, it should be a qualification for everyone. It is like setting a standard. We sometimes hedge away from these rules and standards and operating principles. But the way to choose, beyond those eight GSRs, would be to see which one is the best qualified to do the job. And that gets us back in to principles over personalities.

When we start to establish policy and we start to establish standards then it takes us away from the personality thing. And it really looks at who is most capable to do the job.

And what it does for people on the outside looking in, then is, to say, oh yeah. This makes sense to me. This person has this and this and this. They, maybe I'm being altruistic with that, but I don't think so. I think that's what has been lacking, are the clear lines of accountability, the clear direction.

When you are gonna do a new project you have a program description; you have a project line; you have a time line; you have cost; you have and you get the sense that we operate like that. And maybe some of those things are what we need to devote ourselves to talk a little bit about in this tradition. That's it.

It seems like a logical place to talk a little bit about the history of the service structure and the loosening of the grip of the trustees on hidden responsibility or the World Services turning it gradually over to, you know, the RSRs.

...People just decide, oh I'm gonna do this. They go do it. And you know this is where it tells us, it warns us. No, you know, the work of N.A. needs to be done by service boards or committees that are *directly responsible* to a group or an area or region or service conference. Lone Ranger activity doesn't, you know, doesn't work. It may be great ideas or whatever, but that accountability is so important.

I do not believe in the thing of the separation of the spiritual and the business side. I mean, God! It frightens the hell out of me that we could make business decisions that we didn't take into account spiritual principles. I just don't see that there is that kind of division. I believe that, or I hope our World Service Conference, in their committees and boards, are organized.

I think that "N.A. as such", what they're talking about is that group level, you know, meeting, I mean, talking, one addict, the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. I think this is part of the non-professional thing again, that we don't start putting out some type of treatment program or professional therapeutic kind of thing. I think that's what that was about, but any service board or committee will hopefully be somewhat organized to do the work that they have been given to do. And that's what I think should be the focus of what we're talking about in the material that we've put in the book. Is, *why* it's important that they be responsible to those they serve; is, that that link really needs to be there. Which means reporting and communication and all those things that help people participate in that process. So, that the individual member of the group feels that they're being responsible for whatever work that group is doing, and a member of a committee feels that they are really accountable to whoever has elected them or put them in that position, or for the work that they're doing. I think that

needs to be the focus of this. Because that applies to anywhere in our service structure or....

And I believe, I hope that all of it is based on spiritual principles, that there isn't a division. I've heard it talked about, not today that way, but heard it really talked about as though the business of N.A. is somehow dirty and not spiritual and you know, I hope not.

If you eliminate the words "as such", what you come up with is "N.A. ought never be organized." And "as such" is parenthetical. Instead of writing two lines to explain it, I would have to think that the writers were saying that "N.A. ought never be organized", but by saying "N.A. as such ought ever be organized", what they are saying is: we recognize that there is a point in time and a point in place when we need to have organization. This was written at a point in time when they were promulgating something that had very futuristic connotations to it. They didn't know where it was going to go.

It seems to me like they were leaving it open for two reasons, as such or ought to, instead of shall or should. And so they were giving N.A., the wording, was to give the organization the freedom to organize service boards or committees. So, N.A. shouldn't be organized, but N.A. can have organized service boards and committees as part of the N.A. structure.

The thing that I like is the direct responsibility here. And the direct responsibility points to those they serve which goes back to the region or world and N.A. And those they serve then has to be empowered for policy purposes by the trusted servants that they are (not sure on this word). So that we come in a full circle. It allows N.A. to have the organizational bond that leaves for the administration of the policy. But that policy needs to be set by the trusted servants or by N.A. through its trusted servants. And it takes us in a complete circle from telling us that N.A. shouldn't be organized but, you may have uses ... in your service structure in order to get the work done in your organizational things.

And I kind of see that, I didn't want to discuss it with N.A., but I kind of see the same things in Eight with the service centers as I see in Nine. But they didn't put the word "service centers" into Nine, and I kind of see the same kind of responsibility and organization for policy in Eight and the administration of the policy in Eight with the service centers. So, I kind of see that Eight and Nine really intermesh quite, quite succinctly.

All of a sudden I feel like the last hour and a half of discussion has been like on world service. And I hope that we were right. Or we'll take the input we have here, that we don't all of sudden put this thing to have the flavor, before this thing was really geared towards groups and members. Now all of a sudden we are switching to the, we're concentrating on world and what ever you can take out of that for your use. I'm hoping that we don't continue like that in terms of what this is all about.

...Now, I wonder where (inaudible) we can start tying in the First Tradition here in terms of who do they serve. If, I mean, what is it they serve? Do they serve the people that elect them? Or anybody? The group wants to have an anniversary for its first meeting. And they want to delegate four people to be responsible to putting together the anniversary party. And they say, OK, you two guys take care of this for us. We elect you to do that. Now do the people that elect them, is that who you serve? Or do you serve all the people that go to meetings, everywhere. That's one we didn't touch on that at all, in terms of tying it into the First Tradition, when we...

It says here, it doesn't say "directly responsible to those elected." But that's what they want me to say when they say that. Though we take it to mean that point blank. But I wonder if it doesn't mean that those they serve is the whole, in terms of our common welfare, when we deal with these small groups, and do the responsible thing for a majority (questionable word).

I wonder if the tradition itself doesn't change the direction, or at least the Eighth Tradition begin to change the direction simply by the fact that it's the first place that it says Narcotics Anonymous. It doesn't say N.A.; it says Narcotics Anonymous. I wonder if there is a specific reason for that.

Yeah, um, I see a real, I see that the phrase, "N.A. as such ought never be organized" and the phrase "Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional," fairly equivalent. I really see those as pretty much the same kind of statements. Umm, "N.A. as such ought never be organized", "Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional". I think those are really closely related statements. And I think those describe something about Narcotics Anonymous.

And I do kind of draw a line between the meeting and the group. Umm, or the recovery functions of this thing we call Narcotics Anonymous vs. the, we won't use the business (inaudible) administrative functions. And not that either is necessary spiritual or not spiritual.

But there are functions of Narcotics Anonymous that deal with one addict helping another, that deal with directly carrying the message, that deal with things like empathy, caring, sharing, all those things that happen in our meetings. And those functions really aren't, there isn't distinction between those functions and the things we do to support those functions.

I think that's the differentiation that's been made here. Those recovery functions and the things we do to support those recovery functions and I think that takes place within the group. And I don't think that it takes place somewhere out in World Services.

I'd like to begin at this time talking (questionable word) about this tradition in the group. There are functions, there are administrative business functions supported functions within a group that really must take place in order for the meetings to happen. Someone has to be organized

enough to come and show up and open the door. There is an organization, there are some organizational requirements. Probably someone has to be organized enough to pay rent or more or less on time. There are supplies to be arranged for. There are some, perhaps some clean-up functions and set-up functions to be done. Someone has to be organized enough to set up chairs.

And I believe that that is where our service structure really starts. And I would equate our service structure with those functions. Or the service boards and committees

established to provide the functions which support recovery, support the primary purpose. What ever you want to be.

I've been known to say that the purpose of the service structure is divided into the traditions. I think that is really an oversimplification. I really don't believe that. But there is a sense there that I think has some validity. That we need to create service boards or committees to find, to do some things for us that we have a tough time doing in the strict adherence to some of the traditions: "ought never be organized", "fully self-supporting through our own contributions", you know, "primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers", and the unity, and all that stuff.

I think that we have some functions that are required, the kind that are difficult within those restraints. And I think we create service boards and committees separate from the recovery base in order to do those things.

I believe that the traditions says real clearly, talks about the nature of those service boards and committees which we create and they say are directly responsible to those they serve. And I think every service board and committee, or committee, should have a clear understanding of who has created them, who they are responsible to, how that responsibility is maintained, and who they are accountable to. I think that's a *must*. Those four things: how they have been created, who has created them, who they're responsible to, how they are responsible and how they are accountable, can we answer that? (pause) As the Board of Trustees?

Who created the Board of Trustees? Does any body know? Was anyone here in 1965 when the Board was created? Who created the Board of Trustees? Did the fellowship create the Board of Trustees? The fellowship at that time.

I don't know. Let's assume the fellowship created the Board of Trustees. Okay, let's make that assumption. Just like in 1968 we made the decision to publish all our literature and then they agreed on it. Just like in 1971, they made a decision to hire a manager for World Service Office. Just like in 1974 they elected Jack as the person to form a corporation.

Okay let's make the assumption that the fellowship created the Board of Trustees. Okay, so who are *we* responsible to? We are responsible to the fellowship through the World Service Conference. And representatives

Are we accountable to them?

Was that always the case though?

NO.

No, that wasn't always the case.

No, it sure wasn't.

There was no World Service Conference when the Trustees were created. So, Yeah.

Interesting

I think you really need an answer to that question, really need it, if you're going to pursue this particular...

We need to do, is be able to answer these questions a little better than we are, really. And how are we accountable? We could be removed I guess. There's a clause for that.

Those type of questions, I think are important questions. Whether that's the Board of Trustees, whether that's a group that is responsible to the members that attend the meetings of that group, or whatever. A committee, this is evidently a expanded, I don't know if this is a Board meeting, this is a special Board meeting. Most the folks here are part of a committee of the Board of Trustees. Right?

Who is that committee responsible to? Who created the Board of Trustees?

Did the Board of Trustees create that committee?

The Board of Trustees had a task they needed to have done. They created a committee to fulfill that task. This committee is responsible to the Board of Trustees.

They have been delegated that responsibility to the Conference who is responsible to... No, we have not been delegated that responsibility to the Conference, at all.

The task was delegated to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees established a committee. It is responsible to them.

That kind of understanding is important. The need to be able to define our lines of accountability and responsibility, I think is important. Umm

I think that (several talkers) answering those questions for each of us or for the committee is important. I think that maybe we've been talking about everybody kind of needing a group, periodic inventory. And that those are some of the questions we ought to be looking at: who has created us, who are responsible to, how are we responsible to them, how are we accountable. Those are valid questions that every service board and committee probably should ask. And that is part of this process.

Sure I think this tradition sets up the possibility of a service structure. The task is what's important. I think sometimes we get caught up in the

structure and forget the task. Perhaps the biggest problem I see in our service structure today, is that we implemented a wonderful structure but we didn't pay much attention to the service (questionable word). And some of the services have gotten lost by the way side, some of them have been delegated elsewhere. We talked earlier about Twelfth Step work. The primary purpose of the group being to carry the message to the addict who still suffers and how we have delegated that to service boards, committees and treatment centers.

We've talked about how it doesn't feel the same some times. And I, I don't know, I agree with all those (inaudible). We pass the buck in a lot of places.

Area service committees were designed to be the primary service providers for the groups. So often, that has been delegated to regions. One of the primary functions regions were designed for was the interface with state agencies. Virtually no regions in the United States interface with state agencies. No one does. State Board of Education, State Board of Health, State Judiciary, State of Corrections,

That's what the H&I and P.I. committees do (inaudible)

Occasionally, almost never with state agencies, usually with corporations. Almost never with state agencies. Some of the tasks that things have been set out for have been lost in the shuffle.

One of things that I think is real important when we take up on the serious (or maybe service) responsibility of creating service boards and committees, is to clearly define the task of that service board or committee.

Can I just add something that in a relationship of that committee to those they serve.

I think that's one of the things we haven't done real well in the past. Is, we haven't clearly defined those relationships.

This is great discussion, but can this stuff really be worked into this tradition (inaudible) at the writing (questionable word)...

I don't know, maybe.

The other part of that though, you were coming at it from who created us and who are we responsible to, the different boards or whatever. I was thinking about it from the other point of view, that, maybe we do, as much as I hate to like, pick apart and define words, and phrases, and what does this phrase mean? and things every time I ask a question.... I sort of wonder if maybe we don't need to take some time with "N.A. as such" because it is referred to here in very important ways.

What that says to me is that we have more of a responsibility, that we, "N.A. as such", who created these things to make them responsible. That's our responsibility. ...You know, maybe the regional service committee were originally thought to, they were gonna be the ones, their primary reason for existence would be the interface with the state agencies, or whatever. And that hasn't turned out to be true. Now have I ever gone back and looked to my region and said, Hey, this is what we created this region to do?

Either they aren't doing it, or it's not necessary. So, what do I want them to do now? Do I want them to do anything? You know, let me tell them what they're supposed to do. I need to make them accountable to me. And so that's why I wonder if it's important to spend some time defining "N.A. as such". I don't know. If "N.A. as such" is going to be the thing that creates those service boards and committees then, I for one, in my own mind, need to get clear on what "N.A. as such" is. Does it relate directly to the "we" that is creating the service boards and committees?

I also think that its important to keep that phrase real basic and real simple, because (inaudible) to get caught up in, well "N.A. as such" means this, and this part of N.A. isn't suppose to be organized, but this part over here can. And I don't know if that's fruitful at all to get that concerned with it.

To me, "N.A. as such ought never be organized" has always simply meant that our groups aren't, don't have formal organization. You know, that they aren't headed up by some management team. The decisions of the group aren't made in a formal manner because of a set organizational standard or pattern.

You know I, "N.A. as such", to me, really, I think is much more just a society of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem and who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. It is really the spirit of, the kind of spirit of the fellowship. It is also, you know, the loner out there who is trying to follow the principles of this program and work the steps. It's that we don't keep membership lists and that we don't, you know, and it's that kind of thing and I do think, Greg, that the service structure starts with the groups. And I do think that groups are organized. And I do think that they need to ask themselves if they are being directly responsible to those they serve, which are the addicts coming to their meetings. You know, or trying to reach out and come to the meetings.

And from there, I mean, we get so attached with it, but without that, the motivating, kind of spiritual desire that I think we get to stay clean, the state of grace that gets us here. I mean that to me is what N.A. is. I don't mean to be disrespectful, but thank God it's not all (questionable word) the service structure, and that's all. ...That it's something that we really can't even describe. Because it is a spirit that (inaudible) holds this fellowship in there. I guess that really keeps me coming back.

I've had a blind faith that, a lot of years, that I understood this and when I hear this "as such" bandied about here. (inaudible) And I just accepted as, I don't know, a summarization of the preceding traditions that are (or our). As described, N.A. as described, and that's the way I looked at it. Now, I never investigated that. I never went back to those other traditions to see if, how it applied.

We're talking about our groups and our meetings. You know. And then it goes on, you know, "as such". (inaudible) "never be organized" (inaudible).
END SIDE ONE OF TAPE

SIDE TWO - TRADITION 9

Well, the "as such", I kind of feel like it's, like the "as the result of the Twelve Steps", kind of pulls everything together and I think the "as such" is a similar thing ... pulls things together.

And "ought never be organized", I understand what it's saying, but could you think of a bunch of addicts, what would happen if a bunch of us were together and there was no, can you just see it, and there was no structure to our meeting. It just blows me away. I know what they mean by being organized here, but I guess can't see us being together, I guess structure is the word, ...

That's interesting. Treatment centers all around the country try to organize this thing. This gift that we have, in recovery. They have even banned us ... we have a precious gift. You can't organize it. It's really of a spiritual nature.

I just kind of want to do this little storybook thing, like You have two members clean, and when two addicts get clean, and they take this trip to recovery and they're sitting there, and okay I'd share this ... with another member. Somebody else walks in the room and they've got two members and all of a sudden they've got four members and five members and someone says, you know what? If we wrote something about what we are, we would be able to attract more members to share this gift that we have. But if we do this right now we won't have this recovery meeting about sharing this gift. So why don't we set up a committee away from this special meeting that we've got here and that's so vital to our existence and we'll have a committee and a board. Because "N.A. as such" is this, right here.

I think, to me, it's as simple as that. It's pretty obvious we couldn't mix that kind of organization in our recovery meetings. It's been said around the table a number of times. I remember hearing once that our service structure, as far as the committees, are complicated and confusing, but without them it would be even more complicated and confusing. It's okay. They are a necessary evil. Another way of looking at it is that, "N.A. as such", that N.A., or recovery is the product and everything else supports the product. And that's my two cents.

It's kind of like what I thought of your story. It's like we're in this meeting ... we can't upset this situation. That's our recovery here. We need a whole system does all that. Not just what you were talking, but out of that it grows into something we call our service structure. It just rolls right back in to that group that meeting. What we call a group or call a meeting, that is something we are not committed to describing that here in this section of this tradition. It's kind of like there might be a meeting and afterwards they had their group meeting... ... That's something I see tied into here, describing how the structure rolls out....
END OF TAPE

TRADITION TEN

Tom: I've heard we react to this word controversy as if we're not supposed to have controversy in NA at all. That's not what the Tradition says at all, it says we aren't supposed to engage in outside public controversy, drawn into public controversy in NA Meetings. A lot of, I've heard this through the years, a lot of our members that anything comes up that's controversy in nature whether, a good example is aids thing, that it's like people are getting excited stating the 10th Tradition the 10th Tradition because of the topic that was being discussed within our fellowship. It can get very heated because people are absolutely convinced that it's a 10th Tradition violation. I don't know how I would try to word it, they cannot see that this has nothing to do with the 10th Tradition of the things discussed within our fellowship. I heard somebody else say today is that the actual controversy is what really stimulates us to grow. And that without controversy we really aren't willing to question what were doing or what's about to be done. And it's really healthy for us.

Greg: To me what this means maybe most simply when we come together as part of NA we leave our personal opinions our personal prejudices and our personalities outside. We don't have that shit going on in NA. What I think about some issues in the world is irrelevant here. What my personal opinions are about anything other than our primary purpose and the purposes of our group or what's going on in NA are really irrelevant. And it's practicing the principle of anonymity. I let go of my personality my personal prejudice and my personal opinions when I engage in this thing we call Narcotics Anonymous. I mean I can pick those things all back up as soon as I walk out the door. But here in this thing just like were not organized in recovery meetings we don't have professionals in our recovery meetings we leave our own personal shit at the door when we come in to our recovery meetings. Theres a sense about these three Traditions being a description about the Nature of NA as such. All three of them these recovery meetings that were

talking about. I think we can go a lot further than that with this but I think it's a big chunk of it.

Kim: Just briefly because Tom really touched on it. That this definition of what is an outside issue sometimes amazes me. An outside issue is anything I don't want to deal with and that isn't an issue to me. It's whether it's the aids issue whether it's my issues that effect my ongoing recovery as a woman, as a lesbian, as someone that has trouble with authority figures, on jobs, whatever it is you know there are times when people have called all those things outside issues. If it didn't suit them. If it didn't suit them to want to hear it and I think outside issues it really doesn't mean the things that touch a persons life and their ongoing recovery. I had a friend who used to say what are they going to do take away my basic text? You know I'll talk about any damn thing I want to in a meeting. You do not have a right to censure me in a meeting on the issues that I want to talk about for my personal recovery, and that's, unfortunately that's when it is used a lot. The fact that I strongly support meetings that have as one of their focuses responding to our members who have aids. That does not mean that I think NA should go out and make a public statement to Time Magazine about the issue of aids. Its different on the things that affect our lives in our personal recovery and being wiling to deal with these things in our meetings and not calling them outside issues and getting involved in things outside NA with those issues. The things that I have heard most being called outside issues of course most recently aids. It has been anything to do with homosexuality, any thing to do with race. As though it's up to me to tell somebody who is Puerto Rican or Black that it's an outside issue for them to live in a society and not be able to address that in meetings in there ongoing recovery. It Amazes me how this is used. The public controversy in terms of getting embroiled in those kind of things we don't lobby. society is built up of organizations a lot of Nonprofit groups are really lobbying groups. This is really phenomenal we say no we don't lobby were not going to go and try and influence Congress or influence the State legislature put money into ... That's not what were going to do. Were just going to keep focused on what we do and on our personal recovery and within that we have almost unlimited latitude of what those issues are that we personally want to address in our personal recovery in meetings of NA. And were not going out and try to influence somebody else and get embroiled in the debate about drug runners or cocaine dealers or whatever it is.

Becky: A lot of it has been said. I still remember years and years ago I hadn't been clean very long and I heard Bob Barrett talk about the coat rack outside the meeting room where you hang up all your little attitudes about everything in life and when you go in that they have no place and when you go out you can pick them up and you'll find that over the years you'll have less and less. And just the way he said it is one of those things that I heard

that I have never forgotten. That attitude of those issues on the other side of it gives me a much gentler attitude about what we call outside issues. It concerns me that we are so afraid of discussing things that we don't agree on inside our fellowship. And I think that's a pretty fellowship wide attitude. and that with this that we don't put it in writing and we don't engage and we don't encourage any forums for that to happen and I believe a lot of us because of some funny idea we have about Tradition 10. I haven't seen that surface at all. It's hurt us. So, I hope that something can be said that isn't so emotionally charged. Unfortunately it gets hooked to one issue. Every time I've heard it discussed recently it's been something like the aids issue, or special interest meetings and it's not how we believe we function as a society. That we can be controversial here, we can agree to disagree, and have a place for that to happen and it's not drawing us into public controversy. You know we don't go debate at an AMA convention about the nature of addiction. The two are just not the same to me. But that attitude that if it isn't directly about drugs that we can do "this" with it.

Mitch: I like what you said there Becky. When the aids issue first hit our regional floor somebody rose and said we can't discuss that here because it's an outside issue. And that by determining that we can't discuss it because it's an outside issue, it's like you were saying well what do you mean, then where are we going to discuss it. So I understand it goes even further into sexual censorship in meetings. and what can be talked about in meetings. That whole concept baffled me it's like that ones end of this in terms of how far you carry this through, we carry it through to such extremes that its dangerous and it hurts us. It's also if you want to touch on what happens with funds in NA. I've been a dozen times involved in situations where funds have become missing and the next thing they want to do is after they first want to string the person up they want to take them to court, they want to sue them. and then the discussion goes that we can't sue them because we can't go into public controversy. That's how this is used to stop that discussion. I would never believe that people the people would want to get involved in discussing that issue here. I would like to see it discussed somewhere in terms of what we do about what and what we can't do and what is our responsibility towards that issue. Somewhere else might be appropriate.

Stretch: My perception of this is I think or I feel from what I've heard I see ten as the red light for nine. In nine we appointed service boards or committees and in ten we admonished them not to have an opinion on outside issues I don't see 10 having anything to do with the personal discussions that take place within the fellowship. whether it be missing funds or aids or anything else. I don't see 10 as relating to that at all. That's an internal issue and I see 10 as an issue of NA and not the individual member of NA. This is a stop it say's ignoring that were going to appoint these service Boards or

committees and in 10 we say we appointed you guys but you don't have the right to go and do certain things. and I see the placement of 10 as a complete warning level for NA for the regional level, area level in other words I see this completely different. And I think theres a place for the discussion of aids and I think theres a place for discussion of everything else in the fellowship. I think the problem is that were misinterpreting as Tom said right in the beginning is were using 10 to stifle discussion controversy on an internal level and where 10 is really a tradition that discusses the other level. I'm concerned that we may be missing the boat on this. I think that 10 is extremely important. I think 10 tells us that we shouldn't get involved in politics. We shouldn't get involved in religion we shouldn't get involved in any type of issues as a fellowship it did not say that we shouldn't get involved on an internal level with those things that effect recovery and I think that is the distinction that really needs to be made in some manner.

Jack: I think that 10 has a pretty close relationship to six and while I agree, and again here is another tradition where Narcotics Anonymous is spelled out, and I don't think it's an accident I don't think it's like hey you know what we got enough room here let's just spell it out and in all the other places they were trying to conserve space and because of that it leads me to believe more in the direction of what Stretch was talking about. But on the other hand because I also see it as though as a very clear message and warning to the individual member. In the direction of what Greg was talking about when I come in here I put that stuff out there or better yet maybe it's really the reverse in a sense that when I walk out this door from this meeting when I go anyplace as a member of NA then I hang that shit outside. When I go as a member of NA wherever whether that be a trustee meeting I think at a trustee meeting is where I can have my opinion. And we can discuss these things but when I go out there as an NA member even more so at the group level I don't have an opinion. Primarily because I'm a trustee. At least That's the way I feel about it. not that I would even want to engage in opinions about outside issues at the group level anyway even at meetings I can talk about issues that effect me and my recovery. But anytime I am representing NA than I can't do that. So that NA doesn't get drawn into Public controversy. But I agree and if we are not allowed to if this tradition is telling us that we are not allowed to discuss these issues that this board has been out of line for many years. because we have discussed all these issues and have tried to find out where the traditions play a factor in this and how some of these issues relate to the traditions and how can we best provide guidance to the fellowship when these controversies have arisen internally Controversies on these kinds of areas will arise internally and obviously have and will continue to. And I agree that sometimes that they get used the traditions get used to stop the discussion of subjects that are difficult or painful confusing that we don't know the answers to. But I don't at the very least don't see this as a warning against us discussing issues that are effecting

NA. and if nothing else I would hate to see Narcotics anonymous make any kind of statement about aids publicly but if we are going to say that aids has nothing to do with NA I missed the boat somewhere it's tuning our back on a large segment of our fellowship. That here today and it is certainly not preparing itself for the members who are going to be coming to us tomorrow.

Craig: Maybe it's just the censor in me but I know personally when I get involved in controversial subjects It usually deals with something about myself that I don't want to be dealing with. And I see meetings drift off into discussions or whether drugs should be decriminalized and possibly that would effect NA. We would have a bunch of new members coming in or something or there would be a bunch of people leaving and I've heard people say the only way to get clean is through Jesus Christ and I think there comes a point where something is so public and so non recovery that I find myself with the need to say in my sharing that this sounds like a bunch of bullshit and were not doing anything about recovery and I don't know whether this tradition has anything to do with it. That's what my concern is. ...but I don't think much addicts are sitting in a room talking about what a Mayor on the East Coast said about decriminalization of heroin. I don't think were going to go into the media and get drawn away from recovery by that by the freak occurrence of that night. But there is an uneasy feeling about saying it's always OK to talk about anything and in meetings I think we lose focus.

Greg: Something he said turned something in me he said Aids has nothing to do with NA not correct. Something is incorrect in saying something has nothing to do with NA. What maybe correct is that NA has nothing to do with something. With legalization of marijuana and that turning that one sentence around to me explains something about this tradition. When we say that blank has nothing to do with NA That's not true. Whether That's legalization of marijuana or Aids or whatever. But it is true that NA has nothing to do with the legalization of Marijuana or aids or whatever. Part of what this is saying to me along with what I said because I still think there is a personal level of leaving my prejudices outside the door, there is this idea of not becoming embroiled in societies controversies. That the key is societies controversies. That we do not engage in societies issues.

Male speaker? I really like what stretch has to say about that Tradition #9 I really do like that and as far as I think it relates a lot to tradition 5 and our primary purpose is one that we get in trouble with all these other ones right a way there is disunity but that goes without saying I guess. I don't know about leaving all my opinions out on the coat rack I bring a lot of them in and I think it's really aimed at getting involved in public controversy, now I'm Thinking of a situation that happened where the board of directors of the convention I think, the office had a long discussion about it. And thinking about #9 being one of those groups #10 we were admonished as that group

not to get into public controversy and we felt that a need to take a stand on that issue and say that because theres going to be a convention and theres going to be a program and your going to have something on there that say's about aids and people will screw it up and this is where were are going to find out about it and the press is there and etc...etc...And I think that we have a liability about that sort of thing. So the thing was not to have that opinion and it was changed and I thought it could have been done better possibly but that it was changed to read something to the effect of Health something or another and then members of that group talked pretty much what they wanted. The weren't directed to not talk about aids. I look at it as it's aimed towards the group or the fellowship. I think the committee involved is responsible to take a stand and I think it was a good stand.

Tom It's a year or so ago Kim and I went to this AA service thing in Hawaii called PROSSA there was a really interesting scene there. They had an agenda that was incredible a list of topics dealing with every thing under the sun that you could think of. All the way from is our meetings getting to big to people swearing at meetings to the drug addict in AA just incredible the agenda but what it was an open forum for discussion of these topics. And the people would come to the mike and give there 2 cents and scream or whatever. Nothing was ever resolved, there was no resolution to any of the topics and it's kind of like before that we talk about the issues of the day they just pass. They just cease to be the issues around anymore. There's never any resolution in this thing. There wasn't suppose to be. We have had the propensity to squash any discussions at all within our fellowship that it causes this disunity One of the things I was interested of the policy structure, training and education was a move towards this concept of an open type forum that issues like this can be discussed around the fellowship. there is a need because I don't like these discussions being brought up in our recovery meetings. For the same reason we talk about the 9th Tradition. The focus shifting on this spiritual message we're talking about here but there does need to be a forum for it. The reality is that a lot of these things do pass. The least resistance there is towards them when they arise, the quicker they will pass. The more resistance to them the stronger the gravity intrrenches themselves. I don't know if this helps in putting something together for this tradition It a question of how formal the discussion is in the appropriate place.

Mitch I like what was said before about when we go outside as an NA member we leave that stuff here and if we need to talk about it we can talk about it anything in this kind of a structure. It's when we go outside as NA that we have no opinion. I think Stretch brought us back in to that and you Jack brought me into focus on that and I really like that.

Craig It's really hard to go not to have an opinion because the first thing my experience is that they ask you your opinions about stuff that are outside issues that they go right for that. "What do you think about the relationship between NA & AA?" or questions like that. and it seems to me that someplace we need to learn how to deal with that. I started to learn how in the meetings but I was in no way equipped to do it at my first PI Presentation. And maybe that kind of preparation needs to take place outside of recovery meetings.

Male Speaker? I think there needs to be a real clear delineation between my opinion as a member of society and my opinion as a member of NA. and it all gets summed up in the twelfth tradition because if theres anonymity I don't go out and say that I'm speaking as a member of the board of trustees and therefore hold NA accountable for my opinion and I kind of think that this is the real parody that comes with this. What I see as really happening is that, Mitch brought up the point that if somebody steals do you sue them or not, That's part of the problem. Could you imagine that if a newspaper article that somebody writes that says John Jones has aids and is a member of NA or John Jones just robbed a bank and is a member of NA. What does NA do? NA now goes up and says wait a minute he didn't rob a bank as a member... So your really caught in a catch 22 and I think the 10th tradition says stay the hell out of it man. That's really where it's at. and That's how I see it. I read it very simple, just keep your nose out of it. Don't concern me.

Greg: I just have a piece of historical trivia. I remember when the WSC we could not talk about the WSO because it was an outside issue. That's true that happened.

Donna: It was already said but I will highlight just for the record that was brought up by Kim was that we don't lobby. People will ask us, well you all are experts about drugs, what's your opinion about it. We don't give it that's why we've got this tradition. it's cause we've got a committee or a board for them to call people from and say what's that deal, tell us, you guys know, we don't do that and the point that Becky made about our unwillingness and our inability to want to deal with things and to take this as an excuse for us not to deal with things that really are real as members within this fellowship there's a big difference between the two.

Female speaker? I like Greg's personal point of history it puts it all back in perspective.

Kim I just have one thing that came up we'll stick to the discussion of when Tom was talking about a forum for these types of discussions and one thing that I would really like us to go into is that I find really very difficult that as a member of this fellowship that I go to the world convention where there are no gay meetings. On a list of the kinds of meetings we have at a world

Convention. Man, lets be worried, lets really be paranoid about this stuff that something horrible is going to happen. What's going to happen if there is a gay meeting that I can go in to and deal with a particular part of my life and my recovery. The forum that Tom & I went to they just didn't seem, AA in Hawaii Didn't at least, just didn't seem to be worried about it and whether the press was there no matter what they were talking about whatever it was and I really think that mentality don't serve us. Conventions would be a great place where we could have special topic meetings where people can go and I just think it would be ideal place. And our World Convention... I mean i don't know that theres a whole herd of press waiting outside our world conventions to run in and look at the topics and print articles about them. I know that's not true because AA has conventions where they have those kinds of topics all the time and it don't happen. Why would they be waiting for us to have a gay meeting or a meeting that dealt with aids. I wanted to stress that because I keep telling people that I am going to keep talking about having more interesting meetings at the world convention.

Jack: I guess one of the things that this sparks is while a lot of the time I think about our discussions of AA or our phobia about mentioning AA is absurd my concern is of us using AA as a forum for how they apply the Traditions scares the shit out of me. Because I don't see them as doing a very good job of paying attention to the Traditions. And I think that the way you express that with concerns to a mirror to do that because I just in a general manner of obviously an extreme example of giving opinions on our condition at an AN convention would scare the shit out of me and I would certainly be jumping up and down and yelling and screaming that they had no business doing that and I hope I wouldn't be alone. But one of the , when we get into the area of discussions of these issues and how they effect or how the traditions should be applied to them. What I find that the majority of the problem is and I know where I had the most difficulty is when I came into the discussion believing I knew the answer to it and I had strong opinions about the issue that was going to be discussed or issues and came in with the idea that I knew the answer. And I wasn't open to anything that would sway me from my view. I'd like to believe that 90% of the time now I'm able to try to walk into a discussion with an open mind and pretty much with the attitude that I'm coming in to have my mind changed rather than change everybody else's mind. That's where all the insanity comes from. Instead of trying to find a way to come into discussions with a win win situation. and I don't know what this necessarily has to do with the tradition but I think it has a lot to do with how we come together to discuss issues. If somehow we can begin to come into these situations with the idea that I'm not looking to come out of something as a winner or certainly causing somebody to become a loser in the situation, that this can be a win win situation and that I don't have to come in trying to jam my opinions down peoples throats. I can express my opinion and hopeful listening enough and intently enough and consider

opposing opinions or different opinions. And certainly it's made my life a whole lot more comfortable.

TRADITION ELEVEN

Stretch: Looking at trad as a body. 8 talks about the individual this one starts out with "our" and I would assume that that ties up the previous 10 to mean the individual, group and the entire structure of N.A. otherwise it would state N.A. only. I need to understand "our" here.

Jack: I like to look at it like you did. Including all aspects of N.A. since the rest seems to be based on that anyway. It should be based on all of that.

Greg: 11 is most weakly developed in all our writing. fairly self explanatory. Public relations what does that mean? The way we relate to society, the public, addicts that aren't part of N.A. Are we trying to attract the general public? No, addicts. There's in here the whole idea of carrying the message to non-addicts, we do carry a message to society which eventually attracts addicts. It is important to have a relationship with society many times people send addicts to us based on our public relations policy. This is where we have discussion of carrying the message beyond the addict. Policy, what is policy? Sometimes I will define the word policy, get across the idea that N.A. is something you choose, not coerced into. Attraction-choice, promotion-promise. One example-home group printed t-shirts and offered that anyone may join promoting members for the group, stopped doing that but that has happened a lot. A lot of groups give texts to members. Offer gifts for group membership, that's a big problem. The last phrase, 2 kinds of anonymity: anon in society, and within the fellowship, 11 trad is how we relate to society.

Stretch: I need to know that there is a PR policy, I don't think we have one. I don't think anyone in this room can tell me what that is. The trad is based on a fallacy. This leads me to believe that there is a printed policy, I have a problem taking this literally. if there isn't a policy, we shouldn't say there is one. I think attraction rather than promotion is good. I think we need to distinguish between PI and PR policy. Address that PI isn't PR policy. Discuss it negatively, what it isn't. Anonymity needs to be broadened, there is more than press radio, films, need to add other media, need to broaden to include individual anon and any member at any level.

Jack: Based on fact that we don't have a written policy, that this is the guideline for the unwritten policy.

Danette: Your logic is attractive but the Trad is written that way for a reason. It says it is based on attraction not promotion, no matter what the

PR policy is. I would hate to see us establish a written policy. It is wide open to interpretation. If we stop long enough and wait for the answer to come, to know that whatever happens will be based on attraction rather than promotion all will be well. We have to take time and have willingness to look at it that way rather than make policy. It does relate to our relation to the public. Do the same rules apply within the fellowship? (Greg's example) I don't think that carries the spirit of the Trad. Broaden the interpretation of attraction, personal attraction based on being an example, I need to keep this in mind, I do present a picture and I want to be representative of attraction. Problems there, we don't share examples of how this affects us. We elect people (secretary) who will deal with the public, the meeting facility and they are too new to understand and we expect too much. Need to discuss opportunities of interaction with the public. I rather see focus on that than how we do it wrong. Anon: added TV to my statement of the Trad on a meeting format. Thought I was updating the Trad, I didn't have permission to change the Trad. I may need more info so far-I didn't think anon applied on a one to one basis that I don't need to maintain my anon on a personal basis. I need more information on that, I thought the best way to be a part of the PR policy and view it is to open, I haven't been in a place where I had to be careful, I do that kind of info giving. I never felt I had to do it then. Anon is not just a picture and a name, also includes personal details that can identify "me". We use this as a guide for all PI, maybe it isn't meant to guide all our PI efforts.

Bob: Role modeling, when people look at us they need to see the message in our lives. If it can't be seen there is no message to give. People who cross over, how we treat other members, so that people want to attend our meetings, we end up starting controversy, negative promotion for our fellowship. There are some areas where we need to disclose, situationally for credibility. How we handle ourselves in public is extremely important, for employers to refer troubled employees to us they need to see there is something worth referring to. For our families they need to see something in our lives for them to see it's worth going to. How we conduct our daily lives, it really does put a significant part in attracting people to our fellowship. The hospitals and institutions we deal with, we need them to want to refer people to us.

Mitch: I was reading this, looking at it like 8 9 10, as a package, in terms of structure, the committee aspects, we have addicts on these committee but the temptation is going to be to represent N.A. individually. There is a warning in that second half. The first half addresses that committee work. The committee is there to create policies, creating guidelines in terms of this is how we do it in N.A. The way we do our recovery is by example, and the way we do our service is by example also. This needs to carry over into how your committee does its work. Servants represent the group, how they

behave, they can make statements. Creative freedom is for us, within, if we do that in public as my way, then we lock ourselves into it. When we deal with the public we act in committee, interaction with the public has to not be on a personal level. I may have the best intentions on a personal level, I have dealt with the Canadian consul, what I want to say is "I am the RSR in NY and I want to tell you", that's what I want to do. The danger is that when we interact with the public we don't represent N.A. individually.

Greg: Unfortunately we do represent N.A. individually many times. There is a difference between public disclosure and private disclosure. That may be a concept we can develop. This trad talk about public disclosure. Private disclosure may be part of my 12 step. We have PR policies, no opinion on outside issues. PI is PR policy, we provide information not counseling. We have no connection with outside stuff, trad 6,7,8, and 10 are all PR policy. Certain degree of personal anon at the public level, this is where t-shirts, jewelry etc, when I publicly disclose my membership I am in danger of creating problems. Whether than is verbal, behavioral or whatever. Creation of spokespeople and celebrity. Violation of another form of anonymity, we don't have a special class of members, we don't create celebrities by letting certain individuals represent and speak for us, unfortunately we do, we shouldn't. I went to NIDA as a representative of N.A. we do that, that happens regularly, we set ourselves up for it, The trad indicates that we shouldn't. A policy of never traveling alone, we look at it as safer but it is also so no one is a spokesperson.

Craig: Personal recovery is an issue, this is the only one that could kill people. People that went public could die. Divide public relations N.A. railroad there's something emotional about that, Does this Trad apply to how we get people into our service structure. Naranon has "communications media". Recently we have a situation getting a convention going so a person used the recovery house he worked for because he thought no one would want to do business with. Don't try to use N.A. to get you out of a situation. Our PR policy became so restrictive at one point that nothing human made it through, you could say N.A. here's the phone number, can't say anything personal etc. I saw someone give a PI pitch and she was boring, nothing personal came out of her. Issue of non-addict trustees, the way we solve this problem of who to put on TV is to put non-addict on TV. Do they need to adhere to this tradition also?

Jack: One thing is this is not just a matter of exhibiting self discipline, not be negative attraction. Group has a responsibility to pay rent on time. That is a reflection on all of N.A. the conventions are a great example, positive way usually, but also rooms trashed, motorcycles in lobby, that reflects on N.A. In those situations whether we choose to break our anonymity or not we are representing N.A. Not just a matter of how to express ourselves in public,

sometimes just being there causes us to represent N.A. Our behavior will reflect on N.A.

Kim: This is one that I have thought a lot about. There are positive things that are a part of our PR policy. As a fellowship "if you are a non-addict you don't know anything and it's us against the world if they don't like it" One thing we are trying to address in I/E is how to dismantle the destructive parts of our PR policy. They come out of our disease, not out of our recovery. Tremendous amount of respect that recovery generates in us for others, at least when I am in touch with the God within instead of being fear centered I tend to treat people with love and respect. Recovery is an attraction, I don't believe that N.A. is an invisible fellowship, I don't know about having N.A. emblazoned on our chests. When I tell someone I am a recovering addict, 9 out of 10 times there is a reason for that. I don't work in a field where I need to worry about that. I believe this tradition relates to level of media, not personally. It seems absurd that we frequently don't know the last names of people we have known for months. It doesn't say that we are anonymous within the fellowship and I don't know how many times I have wanted to look up a phone number and I don't know who we are except on a first name basis. I know why the first name basis, but in our personal lives it is a personal decision on whether they know I am a recovering addict or a member of this fellowship. That is something that I have believed for a long time. We aren't anonymous in this fellowship. The spirit of anonymity is that we are all equal. The level of press, radio and film, I believe it was aimed at people who wanted fame. Personally within the community they know. That doesn't mean I represent all of N.A. by that. That would mean no one could ever know because I am not always a perfect human being. In A.A. they seem to not feel this is important anymore. I think we need to put something that we need to present ourselves in an attractive manner in all our affairs with the public. Dignity, integrity and respect for others and not be afraid to tell someone how we felt if their behavior is out of line. It takes a lot of courage to be in this fellowship and be willing to be able to tell the truth about what is happening. We need to encourage each other to do that in a way that isn't blaming, in a way to say this having an effect. Favorite story, unlisted helpline number because printing it would be promotion. People get really backwards on this stuff. We do have a policy based on attraction. Attraction doesn't mean passivity. It doesn't mean dragging them in off the streets, it doesn't mean promising. No guarantees.

Man: One thing I agree is responsibility. What goes on in conventions, different ways we interact, being responsible for our own actions, in response to seeing something wrong to speak out. Discuss the differences between individual who thinks they are doing something good and putting themselves out on a limb. I tell people all the time, having lived in a small town for a long time, if I got loaded it's not a good reflection on the whole. There is a

reflection on whether this program works or not if we have to keep going to these meetings all the time. 30 years and you have to keep going, what's wrong with you? I don't think we ought to read any more into it than is there. I took it to mean level of press, radio and films.

Woman: Husband called all friends and told them to come with him and then he called their parents and lost a lot of friends. Not a matter of telling people it's showing them. "Look I can get better" People who want it not people who need it. My article that got published, I said that in my opinion that N.A. was the only thing that worked for me. The "impaired" title perpetuated the problem. My editor said it was a shame I couldn't have my own byline, I was personally anonymous there were people who knew me knew it was me and I still struggle with the appropriateness of that.

Mitch: Other service situations where this comes in. Service centers are high profile, something we may want to bring into focus. Is selling our literature promotion. Is selling it outside of us promotion. Another thing, the video thing. Videotaping celebrations. Meeting last night, someone was videoing and taking pictures of the celebration. H&I chair believes it is right to video tape meetings and bring them to H&I in institutions. He was asked to stop. Where is discussion on that?

Craig: What is appropriate on flyers? Logo? the name? Is Narcotics Anonymous different from NA? bumper stickers, it would be nice to be able to prove that they are responsible drivers. I have mentioned it to people and they become offended when I suggest that they drive by the vehicle code if they are going to have an N.A. bumper sticker.

Stretch: Distinction made between personal and public, if you disclose that you are a member to a person. We and our say no one has the right to represent N.A. Not that they need to not tell their boss. 2 concepts here in this trad, attract rather than promote, nobody is set up to be spokesman for N.A. That doesn't mean that people can't speak for themselves. Personal anonymity.

Greg: Some places where the logo is better known than the name. Society doesn't understand. They don't understand the concept of recovering addict. They don't understand addiction, addicts are freaks. That's part of immigration problems, there is no understanding or "recovering". N.A. is not a secret society, When we hold ourselves as separate from society we are in conflict with anonymity. WE are part of society, as individuals and as a fellowship. Separate and different is self limiting and inappropriate.

Donna: Policy is just a word for practice. Behavior is a reflection on who we are.

Steve: This one relates to 5 a lot. Our behavior and trusted servants of the group. If it's defined with this attraction and promotion stuff. What is the message? message to addicts and non-addicts. There is a lot of misunderstanding. It's a personal choice when it is not press, radio and films. Never a choice in the media. Another misunderstanding, I don't get that stuff about representation. We do represent N.A., we elect chairs of committees to represent N.A. We have a misunderstanding about this, when we talk to someone and say we aren't representing N.A. that confuses them. Promotion means, in part, when we promote our membership publicly. Bumper stickers, we all support them there is no excuse for those it really is against our principles, there is no excuse to advertise my membership publicly. We don't have that choice. Clarify about recruiting members, why don't we drag addicts in off the street. That's promoting because it says we have something great, attractive is when we go to skid row and share my recovery, it depends what we do there as to what it is. There is more to the message than I thought.

Hollie: If we talk about presenting ourselves in public, how we act going in, leaving, talk and cuss outside the meeting place, rev our motorcycles. One meeting held in a treatment center that is so vulgar it is repulsive. Do we want a positive recovery message or that life is awful. I'm clean today so it's OK. I don't know whether I would stay if I had some of these meetings as my first meeting. What we say needs to keep the newcomer coming back.

Becky: The only thing I can add is about presenting ourselves, that that could be put in a positive way. Not don't and should. Let's be positive.

Jack: We treat non-addicts as differently. That it is OK for them to represent NA in public media. This(trad) doesn't seem to disqualify non-a or non-a special workers. We have always thought they were outside the Traditions. It seems clear but that has eluded us. We knew we couldn't use members so we thought it would be ok to use non-a. We haven't reached the ideal, but we are getting better. I hope we can present the principles without the negative examples. The expectation is that because we put these warnings out and people are going to respond is second step material. I think we have all done what we would warn others not to do. And we will continue to display negative expressions on NA. They have no idea of traditions or recovery. Motorcycle riders don't see a problem with revving their engines, hopefully parking in the lobby will be seen as negative. We need to allow people to come to their own development, in their own time. We need to illustrate the principles of the traditions.

Greg: Key principle of recovery is choice. I look at this as setting up choice. Attraction encourages free choice, promotions tries to limit choice.

TRADITION 12 - BOT DISCUSSION 3-11-90

Greg: The "grey review" book contained a discussion of anonymity as the foundation of each tradition. Suggest getting this. The practice and principle of anonymity is the letting go those things we use to separate ourselves from each other, those things which define our personality and define us as distinct, isolated, separate individuals. This is one of the things which changes our perspective on the traditions--being able to see "anonymity" in each tradition.

Kim: Reference Bill Wilson saying that spiritual anonymity is the single most important thing about this program (AA). This is revealed over time. It requires me to let go of old ways of seeing things. The process is difficult, long, overwhelming. It asks for faith, trust, letting go of need to be better than or worse than. The enormity of this T is staggering. The spiritual path of letting go of attachment to personal ego perspective is common to all great spiritual literature. It takes a long time working the steps to achieve this shift in perspective and approach this ideal. Let go of self in the interest of larger whole. This challenge to addicts is a major excitement in recovery.

Stretch: This T takes "I" out of every aspect of N.A. It says "we" comes first, the whole is more important.

Bob: We act with immediacy so often and it gets us in trouble because we cannot envision the "whole" in terms of past and future. When we don't have the spirit of anonymity, division occurs. When we act with anonymity, even divided opinions do not divide us because we can keep working through situations to the same truth. We are not secret, separate, or cultish. All this is meant to free us.

Becky: This T has always been an "ideal". It goes against everything which our culture teaches us. Happiness, peace of mind, serenity. There is something about the way we chant "principles before personalities" which is deeply offensive and goes against the whole principle of anonymity.

Jack: That is a reflection of lack of concentration on the first half of the tradition. More times than not, the last half of the T is used to talk about "one's own principles over another one's personality". This is nauseating and offensive.

Mitchell: All the chanting is offensive. Many people wrongly interpret this as simple meaning that what is said here stays here. This, then becomes the foundation of all the traditions in the minds of many.

Kim: The chanting is unpleasant, cult-like, animalistic, group personality. Yucch!! Principles before Personalities does not mean that we all conform and become alike. It should not be threatening nor be an enforcement tool. The principle is that individuality emerges as we come out of our disease. The same concept applies in T-2 about not governing. These do not mean that uniformity is our goal.

Craig: This may be the place to clearly reiterate that "thumping" this book as a higher source is against this very principle.

Steve B. This brings to mind the concept of doing something for someone else without them finding out about it. Another thing is our attitude toward words - i.e. "concepts" now has a meaning to us which is associated with a group of service people, - this negative connotation is not because of the principle but it is because of the personalities involved! This is right in our leadership and it's scary. Another thing which comes to mind is that if I don't like someone and the only other person who knows this is the person himself, then I am successfully practicing this principle. If other people in the room know of my dislike, I am not practicing anonymity. By the way, how do you say something about this chanting business without sounding stupid?

Nancy: I look at anonymity as being nameless and being all the same for the time we are together. Saying "principles before personalities" is personality motivated.

Jack: In applying anonymity, it is easier to practice my own. More people know I am a trustee than I have told. They know because others have told them.

If the committee decides to use a writer, should the writer be anonymous? The committee is not anonymous. Depending on the visibility of the special workers, there could be problems and concerns about affecting N.A., e.g., some segments of the Fellowship don't want anonymity maintained in the literature writing process and some segments do. We may have employees who are not N.A. members but are members of AA or are recovering alcoholics. Assuming they were hired based on their qualifications, who should care? If the employee is highly visible, then people do care. Where does anonymity get applied? This might be the most difficult spiritual principle to understand and apply. The wisdom that comes with length of recovery experience helps.

My concern with our processes is that things put into the original drafts which have the depth of experience may get taken out because the people reviewing it may have less experience and consequently not understand them.

This is what happened to the anonymity stuff in the grey book. It is frustrating and I must eventually surrender to this happening. We end up having a progressive process which has graduated plateaus.

Craig: We tell people to forget about personalities, but the messenger is important in some ways. The chanting is a phenomenon where people can act out but be part of an unidentifiable crowd and not take responsibility for their actions. It is "anonymous" in one sense, but not in a spiritual way.

Becky: It does say principles before personalities, it doesn't say principles without personalities, etc. or to never have a personality.

Other principles: equality, faith, honesty,