



Core Issue
Apr., 2016 Vol. 4 Issue 4
 By: Lester O.



Goals and Purposes

We believe there needs to be discussion among the members of NA with regard the purpose and direction of our fellowship. There are 'service' groups springing up throughout North America; their goals are as many and varied as our members. Our purpose at 'core' is to provide a venue to facilitate open and respectful discussion among the members of the fellowship. We discuss ideas about how to make the NA fellowship more responsive to the still suffering addict. We hold weekly meetings, publish a weekly newsletter, and plan events for the purpose of uniting our fellowship. These are not core meetings, core newsletters, nor core gatherings; they are our gift to the NA fellowship.

<p>We Believe that the Greater the Base (Global NA Society)</p>		<p>The Broader the sides and the Higher the point of freedom.</p>
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**Yours in Loving Service,
 Lester O.**

Editor of Core Issues
 (A non-profit Newsletter of the Core Group)
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**Summary of Core Group Discussions for the
 Month of March**



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Core Group Minutes

March 1, 2016

FreeconferencecallHD.com

8:30 pm EST, 7:30 pm CST, 6:30 pm MST; 5:30 pm PST

Tuesday Night CONFERENCE CALL

Attendance with area codes:

John F 707 – Mitch 410 – Lester 321

Bo on Minutes

Recording 44479748-671595909.mp3

"Our best dreams become memories in recovery."

Vito - Clean date 2.14.60 - 56 years ago!

From eMails:

"Fear makes us weak. Information makes us stronger."

Important items from last five years.

1. USSC - Vito asked for plan of action.
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“Agentic State” (Reposted from Feb. 9th 2016)

A person has a choice. Once you become an agent of authority, it is impossible to go back. When you walk down the street, you carry a very special gift - your consciousness. It can guide you around obstacles or pull a child out of the path of a speeding car. This gift is tempered by another few gifts, including restraint and discipline. Among these gifts is something called an

“Agentic State.”

This is a gift that allows for teamwork and coordinated group action. You - or I - become an agent of a leader person or group identity. We do what we are told and we transfer some of the responsibility for our actions. Another gift is “critical thinking” which tracks our actions and that of our leaders. If either conflicts with our morals or personal standards, we can stop and re-consider. We can reflect and decide to continue our allegiance to our leaders or take a stand on moral grounds or personal standards.

This state was detailed in a Netflix movie “The Experimenter.” Even consideration of the subject was met with hostility and administrative sanctions. Yet so many of us have heard of the experiment where a person in one room asked questions and if the person in an adjacent room failed to answer correctly, the questioner flipped a switch shocking the other person with increasing voltage, up to 450 volts. And yet the questioner kept going all the way up to the maximum voltage. Google it if you need more details.

The real question was why would an apparently ‘normal’ person inflict pain and risk damage to someone for the sake of a collegiate experiment? Why did they keep going? One Dutchman refused to continue and left the building! He had the ‘critical thinking’ ability and would not do as he was told! For years now, those who resisted the changeover to ‘corporate thinking’ have silently resisted by leaving NA. Or by deadening their reactions to the spin-mastering and steady semantic encroachment by a corporate entity at odds with our spiritual program. Imagine the power of a program that can hook up with a divine force of loving creation! Who would be against such a miraculous undertaking? And yet opposition to the corruption is filled with anger and deprecation! NA goes on with or without corporate approval!

The latest indication of the mindset which makes an enemy of those who disagree with dismantling the process we call ‘group conscience’ is to label us as the ‘darksides.’ Hmn, really? How about surrender, love and caring and spiritual awakening? Are they side dishes or the



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main course? I have heard in an NA meeting lately that self-will is an egocentric think tank. To activate group conscience we have to drop our ego barriers.

Some 'mental health' might be called 'enforced mind control.' We live in an enforced conformity culture. The Holy Inquisition tortured and killed people over belief. Did you know that those accused of witch craft could have exonerated themselves by simply admitting to casting a spell on their neighbor or being a practitioner of witchcraft? They went to be burned at the stake rather than admit to the falsehoods of their accusers.

In light of all this, critical thinking is a real blessing because it allows us to hold up their actions and beliefs to the highest standard a person can have, their own inner voice. – Bo S.

All it takes...

All it takes is one RD and the house of cards blows down. What does World Service do for you? Have you heard of the BCD or the LQW? Confusion results from multiplicity of terms designed to keep you off balance. A stable, long standing service structure allows members to participate and build on the accomplishments of their predecessors instead of reinventing the wheel. How about asking hard questions, "What do you do with the money?" Why do we have to wait for an IRS Form 990 to find out what WSO spent two years ago? Isn't there a line in the form that addresses keeping the membership informed? How about creating a committee to investigate the methods and functions of the growing complexity of what used to be a structure designed to serve the Fellowship in ways developed at through our representative service body? This is conservative, not radical.

Is it possible to restore group conscience to our world service structure? Of course it is. That's what ongoing inventory is all about. Don't look back, find ways to combine efforts among the greatest worldwide movement for recovery ever mounted. It takes some sweat and tears but the feelings are worth it. Those who do nothing will look back on the countless missed opportunities and wonder, "What did I do to help?" We all know that the Traditions are not made to be violated. We have only to act on the common faith held by all of us all these years! The cure for our service structure is for some RD to awaken and rally a reformation movement. We know we have to keep our service loving and spiritual or we will fall into the ego barriers we know so well. We don't want more disputes based on questionable information or needless



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conflicts. Patience, humility and tolerance will guide us. Money, property and prestige will divide us.

What are they gonna do, kill a daffodil? Daffodil have bulbs and come again . . .

Discussion: (03.01.16)

8:30 Open:

Bo – couldn't make meeting, sick in bed, woke at 11.00 pm and called John, Lester and Mitch and left message for John, and amazingly got Lester and Mitch who happened to be up. Both said the meeting went well for an hour and fifteen minutes. When I woke up were wet from night sweats but my illness was gone!

Invited all three to send accounts of meeting to be added here...

10:00 Lester led closing prayer – “Third Step Prayer...”

Thanks for coming!

Next meetings on March, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th, 2016

February 29th makes this a leap year!

Other good closing prayers...

“They say a picture is worth a thousand words. But what if it reflects not reality but an agenda? In this age of airbrushed magazine covers, computer-generated images, reality tv, and phony viral video, have words lost meaning? Or have they become more important than ever?”

“Dear God,

Please protect and provide for me. Guide and illuminate the path of my pilgrimage. Grant me courage, commitment and strength. Teach me to care and give without reservation. Remind me of gratitude and principle. Please allow me to recognize your presence in me and around me and allow my life to be a reflection of your love.” From Greg Pierce



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which is just an outward expression of obsession.”

“That we can all come together for the good of the Fellowship.”

Recording 44479748 - 671428778.mp3





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8:30 pm EST, 7:30 pm CST, 6:30 pm MST; 5:30 pm PST

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John F 707 – Bo S 404 – Brian 540

Recording 44479748-671660286.mp3

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John F – Hi there!

Bo – Tell Brian about RICO

Brian – estimate next Monday, so I will have work doing home repair. Cutting down cherry tree next door for next winter's firewood.

John – Tax return problems.

Brian – Heard about their problems.

John – Hasn't lost non-profit status yet.

Bo – Can't see why they would blank the page listing contributors to WSO. Names and amount can't be that great, enough to warrant their non-profit statue at risk. Is it 'who' or 'how much?'

John – Maybe Dept. of Justice, State of California. CPA's get copies of what corporation gets under their power of attorney. For them to get new CPA firm in 2010 in San Francisco... May lead to RICO investigation.

Bo – I think NAWS/WSO developed a lackadaisical attitude towards the Fellowship and it morphed into the assumption that did not have to be too careful about their tax returns. There is a mechanism where someone who is violating a person's right develops a disrespect for them.

How many addicts came to NA in the past thirty years for help and got disservice instead?

Brian – When using we went along with stuff we didn't like. Came to NA, feel like we can come back to our personal authenticity. Now, by snowballing and hoodwinking the Fellowship, lots of correctness gone. NA gave me complete, creative freedom so I can be the best I can be.

Bo – they have made informed members the enemy. Only the informed are secure enough in their concerns to stand up to the Corporation.

Brian – If we make exclusive committees (Traditionalists) hoping to improve things, they would



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be no different from what we have now.

The committees would make similar mistakes. How can we shut down what is going on without laying the frame work for future problems of the same sort? The Fellowship at large is blind to all this.

Bo – Replace CEO and CFO and they replacements will be on the ball for two or three years.

John – Wonder RICO, everybody who is in on it get charged under RICO Act, it is the worst kind of fraud because it deliberately takes advantage of people in need of help.

Bo – Very proper for us to follow through on this. Wrote an article and sent to Jimmy K called *Waterwall*. It was about the ‘waterwall’ of addicts seeking recovery who would show up when the book came out. It was taken as a criticism rather than what it was: a prediction that came true. We are at the tail end of the tidal wave of addicts who did in fact show up. That is why we are revisiting and re-establishing our roots, hopefully. Jimmy got mad at me for suggesting the book was really coming and they should carefully review their copyright procedures and bookkeeping methods.

CIA looked to heroin in Kabul: linked to all government – Big Pharma, mental health industry, drug court, suboxone, and it is ALL ONE THING. That’s why it is going to be hard to decriminalize drug addiction. They need the money. They are used to it. Nobody sees the big picture.

John – All about money, just what it is.

Bo – Doom and gloom. I’ll be out in the road with you! When a population says, “Don’t talk about that!” they are all thinking about the same thing! Joe Proctor is quoted saying, “It’s our job to speak the unspeakable.” That counts for something. Many members have the attitude, “If anything bad was going on, somebody would say something.” SOMETHING!

Bo – I’m getting a Pomeranian puppy!

John – My dog likes to sleep in my dirty laundry!

Bo – Lisa’s cat ‘Shadow’ like to sleep on my lap and bed cover. Send me a photo of your dog.

John – Getting female German shepherd with papers for puppies!



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10:00 – Bo - Good night all! “God grant us the serenity...”

Thanks for coming!

Next meetings on March 15th, 22nd, and 29th, 2016

Other good closing prayers....

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which is just an outward expression of obsession.”

“That we can all come together for the good of the Fellowship.”

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Fan Page – “coreIssues” on Face Book

Recorded weekly meetings of the core group. We have downloads from all the calls to date. Listing is a chore. Some may not be on our hard drives but no one has asked about them and we go where you directs us with emails or phone calls. You can still dial in for recording of last Tuesday night call by using access code. The downloaded calls I can send you if you need them. - Bo



It turns out “fiduciary”
means you have to give it back.



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Core Group Minutes

March 15, 2016

FreeconferencecallHD.com

8:30 pm EST; 7:30 pm CST; 6:30 pm MST; 5:30 pm PST

Tuesday Night CONFERENCE CALL

Attendance with area codes:

John F 707 – Bo S 404 – Jmu 703 – Lester 321

Recording 44479748-671660286.mp3

"Our best dreams become memories in recovery."

From eMails:

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We are All in This Together

All the best to members meeting in Longwood, Florida this weekend to work for NA goals! We are raising energy and spirit every time we get together. We, as a Fellowship, have need to re-learn the simple principles of our commonality. What hurts one, hurts us all. What helps one,



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helps us all. Replication of positive effort will help us rebuild the sense of interpersonal caring and sharing which is what NA is all about!

Discussion:

8:30 Open:

Bo – Hey, Jmu!

John – Hi.

Jmu – Hey yall.

Bo – John, please explain RICO and tax forms to Jmu.

John – WSO didn't fill our income tax forms properly. One page was left blank – the page listing contributors and amounts of contributions and State of California kicked back the return as incomplete. This is viewed as fraud and can cost us our non-profit status. 100% penalty and interest. For some reason WSO concealed information on contributors. At this point we do not know why they did this. It may be sloppy or even fraud.

Bo – Trying to follow up on a core issue here.

Jmu – Recalls a list of regional contributions, home groups, etc. in WSC minutes.

Bo – Fellowship so relaxed, we have become used to getting information on WSO payroll amounts from the IRS Form 990, two years after period covered. There is a line in the return that states the Fellowship is being informed.

John – Believes CPA firm may have left WSO who would have been culpable by association for incomplete tax return. They got another CPA firm in San Francisco. Both CPA's originated in San Francisco. They probably know one another.

Bo – Hey Lester! Just for Tonight coming along. Kermit posting new essays! Interested members should contact Kermit directly. We will keep posting reports and updates. When Kermit sent in backlog of quotes and essays, I sent out update to core group.

Lester – Anonymi Foundation posted all the ASIS projects online. This weekend ASIA event in Longwood.



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Recall the RD from Portland, Oregon came back from WSC in 1989 and announced he had voted to prosecute Grateful Dave after passionate display at WSC by WSO and WSB. Changed his vote on the Conference floor. What is the sense of voting on a motion if it can be amended or debated on the WSC floor?

Do not think it is good policy to amend or discuss motion after a region votes.

Bo – for instance, one of the parties entrusted to inform Fellowship can withhold information while regions as voting their group conscience and then spring it on the delegates to sway the vote to go the way they want it. This is tantamount to manipulation or rigging the vote, preventing the system from working. All pertinent information should go out to Fellowship well in advance of voting. If additional information is discovered on the way to fruition of the motion, it can be presented in due course and another motion formulated for processing. This makes it unnecessary to rig vote or withhold information from regions. Best to disclose all information in periodicals, including guesses, opinions, etc. If don't in a natural manner, it cuts down on power plays among participants.

John – Get clarification from discussions on core group. Particularly on the events from 1981 to 1984. Baby Blue has Third Revised Edition Basic Text with 4th and 9th Traditions restored as approved by the Fellowship. Credibility is at stake! People outside the system don't trust the system and is self-defeating as far as the system goes. Won't support financially, won't bother to track information related to WSC if there is evidence of information tampering. Defeats and invalidates the system.

Lester – Wants to send out “Principles of Spiritual Self-Governance” with the newsletter in sections.

Bo – Already a free download – good idea to put in coreIssues. Also, working on Just for Tonight starting with January.

10:20 - Lester led the closing prayer Third Step Prayer...

Thank you John and Jmu!

Next meetings on March 22nd and 29th, 2016



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Other good closing prayers....

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Personal comment: (See Addendum A.)



“Motion carried unanimously.”



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March 22, 2016

FreeconferencecallHD.com

8:30 pm, EST 7:30 pm, CST 6:30 pm MST; 5:30 pm PST

Tuesday Night CONFERENCE CALL

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Recording – none.

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"Every good idea has it's time but sometimes you have to wait. One thing recovery has taught me is it is not only good to wait. It is also necessary for others to go through their changes and get ready to entertain - and work for - actualization of the good idea." – Bo S.



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Note: the Agentic State movie is *Experimenter*, not The Experimenter. I am counting this idea as the central item in understanding what the heck happened to our service structure! Watch it. The peers and other affected persons attacked the man who designed and conducted the experiment. He was Jewish and wanted to know how the German population was shifted from educated, civilized and culturally advanced to becoming agents of atrocity in a very short few years.

Discussion:

9:00 Open:

Bo – Sorry late on call, fell asleep after eating bagel!

Mitch – you had a hypoglycemic reaction to carb.

Bo - Feel like I have undergone a breakthrough! Earlier today, talking to Travis, made simile that just like when a school teacher has to teach algebra before calculus, and basic math before algebra, God has to reveal each piece of puzzle in certain order for me to progress. The Agentic State applies to world services! We are on the same page to each other because we learned service long time ago. Anyone who gets into world services today, learns the current way of thinking, attitudes, and terminology: they become agents of the system! That's what spawned and created the ongoing disconnect. I was attracted to 'complete, creative freedom' in the White Booklet. People today are attracted to regimentation, being told what to do, please the boss man! All others are not NA! This is brand new perception. Please think it over. We can discuss tonight if you like.

Lester – Five people from my area went to Longwood. Ninety percent of new members are unaware of area, region and world services. 3% get in service and build some recovery that way. There are six or seven in area with a few years.

John – Every member endorses court slip. Think area, region and world just fine as they are. I still go to area but keep my mouth shut. New series on Netflix called Flaked, 8 episodes. Things good in my life. Moving to basement. Have some concern about falling and not being able to get help. Cut back meetings to two a week. Feel better this way. Great antique show. Dating new girl, nice. Dog is doing great. Got a letter back from publisher. Don't share in meetings at all. Still drive fourteen hours to attend meeting in Kansas, seven hours each way. Great meeting.

Bo – Just allow that better days may be coming. Vito put me with guy from Siberia who wants a taped meeting sent to him. How in Paul D. doing Mitch?



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Mitch – Still doing Thursday afternoon Step Working Guide based on Grey Book at 4:30 pm. Five hour difference with Liverpool in UK.

Bo – Hope this breakthrough leads to some solution. I remember when Concepts were pushed through. Our ASR told us they realized problems with Concepts but would be ironed out later on. I said they would be cut in stone if passed. Stopped going to that group forever when they voted to approve. Didn't decide to quit, just couldn't let myself go. There was a learning day in Aliquippa across the Ohio River and no one showed up except Area Chair, ASR and the speaker. The ASR was honestly puzzled.

Mitch – Chesapeake-Potomac Region – against Concepts from the beginning. Felt they manipulated Traditions. World service only uses the Traditions when they are convenient.

John – When Concepts came out, the Northern California Fellowship felt they would be used to get a leg up on the Fellowship.

Bo – This was the beginning of the Agentic Shift from WS being loyal the general membership and the written protections of the 12 Traditions to WS being loyal to the almighty dollar and their private, personal interests.

John – Didn't discuss in service or recovery meetings because it was felt that discussion would depress new people. Get a job at WSO and they take you down and lease a beamer with the Office co-signing your lease agreement. I personally kept working with newcomers, helping them get clean, starting meetings constantly. Steve B. my sponsor.

Bo – I served as WSC Vice-chair under Steve. Something came up and he confronted me for being proprietary about the literature. I recall vividly he mistook my concerns which were for the general Fellowship, not myself. As Lit Chair, I was deeply aware of the crucial nature of our own benign agentic state. Any departure from the loving, caring relationships we enjoyed when the Basic Text was being written could not be for the good!

John – I recall the Machiavellian surrealistic times when you had trouble differentiating the good guys from the bad guys. Had 87% recovery rate in my area, Napa Valley. Relapse was a rarity. If you wanted NA, you got it! Hottest thing ever in my whole life! Our members got good jobs, schooling, corporate positions, and stuff galore all as part of their recovery.

Lester – What was my experience of the Concepts from 1989 to 1991 was the early review. They were only to be used as guides in service when presented in 1989. After they were passed, they became bigger than life. Portland RSC pushed the Concepts on Areas, groups and members. They were something new! After five years, sponsors took sponsees through the



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Concepts as well as the Traditions! At the birthday meeting tonight a lady with 31 years told about the Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

Mitch – saw you in some pictures from Longwood!

Lester – I was there two days. Twenty-five people showed up. Jim M missed his ride so he couldn't make it. ASIS planned another event for next year.

Bo – Reason for the 'disconnect' is conditioning members to be loyal to WSO, not the world-wide Fellowship. Sorry I was late starting the meeting tonight. I really believe this thing about the Agentic State explains the mechanics of changing members in and around the corporation from being agents of the loving, caring Fellowship to being agents of the corp.

10:00 – Mitch – “God, give us peace in our recovery, clarity in our minds and love in our hearts.”

Next meetings on March 29th, 2016

Other good closing prayers....

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NO Meeting on March 29:



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ADDENDUM A:

At WSC 2014 the motion below, (Motion #4) came up in old business.

Motion 4: To agree in principle to move in the direction of a service system that contains group support forums: discussion-oriented gatherings focused on the needs of the group, as described by the characteristics below.

Characteristics of a GSF:

Essential:

- **Discussion-oriented**
- **Group-focused:** Focused on the needs of the group; decisions related to area business are not made here. Some limited functions like finding volunteers for H&I panels, planning picnics, etc., may take place.
- **Training-oriented:** This is a venue ideal for orienting new members, holding workshops, and training trusted servants.
- **Open to all:** All interested members, not just group representatives, are encouraged to attend.

Recommended:

- **Neighborhood-sized:** The original Service System Proposals see group support forums as significantly smaller than local service conferences or area service committees. There would be several for each LSC. However, we have found through field testing that some communities prefer to bring all of the groups and interested members together for one community-wide group support forum.
- **Meets monthly:** Again, the original Service System Proposals suggest monthly meetings of the group support forum, but in field testing many communities adopted a different meeting schedule. Some had group support forums meeting eight times a year in months when there was no quarterly local service conference. Others alternated GSF and LSC meetings, with each meeting six times a year.

Intent: To establish a direction for the future development of service material.

Knowing that the Motion had little support, it was amended on the floor of WSC to read, "To be included in the GTLS as an option along with our current service units." The Motion then carried through standing vote 76-33-0-1 (yes-no-abstain-present not voting). Excerpted from, (WSC 2014 Draft Summary of Decisions Revised 11 August 2014.)

Personal Comment:

I cannot recall where exactly I read it but it was in a NAWS Publication and it stated that once a motion was published it was no longer the property of the maker. Therefore any changes or amendments must be made on the floor of new business. If this is the case, it is my belief that any structural changes must go back to the groups for any decision making. If not then it would seem that WSC could make any structural change that they wanted to simply by making an amendment to the motion thus making our group conscience null and void. Any thoughts on this?



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ADDENDUM B:

Principles of Self-governance

August 8, 2011

It is important to understand the limitations of a service body. A committee cannot stay clean for you or work your 12 Steps. They are bound by the limitations of their mutual agreements like all human institutions. They have only the power and support we give them collectively. This document deals with service bodies as found in Narcotics Anonymous. Having experienced terrific growth, we now need to reflect on what we have experienced and witnessed without own eyes, ears and hearts. Many will resist learning more about this subject of our arrogance or simple sloth. But the truth is we all need to learn more if we are to have a future worth living for. Every time we lose a member, we are the less for it.

Bureaucracies deal with power over people's lives or beliefs, utilize funds and are in a position to control basic decisions or outcomes. NA is no different except as to the spiritual nature of who we are and what we seek to accomplish by our efforts. Any group that aspires to self-governance must learn certain principles and share certain values as defined in their creation documents. You must make the decisions governing your life and well-being or someone else will make them for you.

Having your own program and not answering to any outside authority does not come easy and requires upright attention and maintenance. It is easy to make mistakes and some mistakes take years to correct. Studying written materials and getting a service sponsor, you will find your understanding comes as your knowledge increases. Many addicts are allergic to personal power. Those who quest after personal power are pretty obvious if you are paying attention. While there are many books that can help, the best help will come to you from your own heart, working your 12 Steps and following the guidance of the 12 Traditions, especially in service work. You can count on making errors along the way, but that is the path to wisdom _ making new mistakes and learning from them. As good folks help you, you learn to help others. You realize it is not egotistical to learn about bureaucracy, it is just that certain principles help make working in groups easier and protect our common welfare.

First impressions may be lasting but they are not always accurate. It is only when we take time to learn a subject that we get the words to describe what we are dealing with and the information to give the background and context for what we are seeing, reading and hearing. A person upset to the point of tears in a service committee meeting may seem to working a poor program or deficient in the mood management or maybe they are just upset because the helpline is being discontinued because funds have been diverted to a pizza party. It happens.

"Bureaucracy is the enemy of self-help programs!" What this saying means is that putting control and management in the hands of a body of members is fraught with peril. The peril comes when people give out inac-



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curate, incomplete or deliberately misleading information that results in disadvantaging the people they are supposed to serve. If they are inexperienced, and most are, they will act out their fantasy of what a chairperson or secretary does, along with the usual learning curve mistakes. The more important they perceive their job to be, the less inclined they are to ask for help or clarification of things they do not fully understand. They want to look good. Like many things we face in recovery, study and learning are easier if done in advance of application. In other words, we can learn easier if we are not on the spot. That is the goal of this little booklet is to provide members with some basic info on information, polling and accountability when working with groups large and small. Large may be several hundred thousand and small may be three to fifteen. But the principles, as you might guess, are much the same, whatever the size or scale may be.

For one thing, unless they studied the subject in school or learned it from their job, most members don't know much about self-governance. So they have to learn to be effective. You have to have active, informed members who consider their voice important and insist on being heard. You have to have leaders who can focus attention on key items to help the group remain competent and informed. Then when the members are asked what to do, they will respond with something like group conscience, because they are in the know on the subject and they are accustomed to being taken seriously. Not to be taken seriously is an injury to the spirit. There is a feeling that comes with being in charge and this feeling is part of our recovery process. Personal responsibility is at the heart of NA!

The question of what is freewill makes us think. Do we choose based on what is best or what is most known to us and therefore safe? If we choose the merely safe choice, we never learn what gifts or blessings other choices may have offered us. This is why we have our Twelve Steps, to learn and grow. Playing it safe can be a really good idea if you have not had a chance to read, study and ask questions. But having done that, our group conscience processes need to include time for reflection and consideration of what results may come from changing a policy just because it gets in the way of what we want to do. Good policies are well thought out by informed people who only wish to help us avoid mistakes and injuries that can be avoided. This is how our recovery and service experience becomes part of our common welfare. If recovery and service were just a matter of endlessly having new people reinvent the wheel, our program would become rather tedious.

Where a body of members comes together to hold certain beliefs that are fundamental to their identity as a group and their reason for joining forces in some common effort, their focus requires them to employ the principles of self-governance. If they were answerable to any outside authority, by definition the goals and objectives of that outside authority would take precedence over the member's goals and values. Self-governance requires accurate information, restraint, self-discipline, and consistent action in accord with the group conscience of the membership. The needs of the group supercede needs of the individual members though a careful reading of Tradition One shows the needs of members follow close behind those of the group.

As we grow in information and understanding, we find our perceptions matching up and completing pictures formed by earlier learnings. Over time this builds a solid base _ person by person. This allows a broader base of understanding and a higher point of freedom, you don't have to manipulate, orchestrate or attempt to con-



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control when following group conscience. Reality is what is there for everybody to find as they become informed. Democracy cannot be ruled so as to avoid the possibility that the people may choose to act on their freedom! Some may even vote for their chains to be restored! If someone is telling you to: read, discuss and study, while someone else is saying: be secret, don't share openly and hope we are not detected, who are you gonna believe? The big question is, "Can God really handle it?" These ideas need to take root, and spread if they are to help guide our fellowship.

What would we gain from self-governance? We would have individual responsibility for group decisions. Uninformed members should abstain from voting on motions until they feel they are properly informed. People who are misinformed will vote in a motion that may fail in application.

Considering a dictionary definition, we find this statement: government under the control and direction of the inhabitants of a political unit rather than by an outside authority; broadly: control of one's own affairs. The enemy of group conscience is self-will. Self-will has its origins in fear of loss of control and desire for power over others. Falsifying information to feed members ideas and concerns so as to predetermine voting outcomes is one thing in business. It is illegal or unprincipled. In a spiritual fellowship, it can result in relapse or death of members who otherwise would be growing in recovery. Fear of honest self-expressions is another sign of self-will. Falsifying minutes or information in reports is a real danger sign.

Polling is tallying responses to a question or motion to determine support or lack thereof. Changing the method of polling indicates a possibility that someone is attempting to manipulate group conscience by selecting a method that seems principled on the surface but is misleading. For example, "I see no reason why we cannot have a show of hands to express our support of the motion." This will generally put pressure on those who are unfamiliar or uncertain because they will vote the way they see their friends vote. The very next day, "This is an important matter and needs to be an expression of individual conscience, so I recommend we do a folded written ballot so everyone will feel comfortably voting their own conscience." This example is taken from WSC 1979.

Where the Trusted Servants do not have to do what group conscience says, it is a matter of their like or dislike. If there are not conference officers in place who can be relied on to back up the voice of NA, there is no group conscience. It is a charade pretending to give the people a voice while denying them that reality. For another, when you pay someone to do something, they have a human tendency to make themselves indispensable. So, some care must be taken to insure paid workers stay within their clerical or functional bounds: the job they were hired to do. Otherwise, they will do little things to protect their interests or promote themselves. Remember, they are human too!

NEW IDEAS:

Why kingdoms don't work: "...people are rewarded for compliance and punished for honesty." Drawings illustrating reports, overviews, statistics, and other ways of presenting information to the membership need to be created and displayed here. Samples of a good report and confusing reports. What is information? Misinformation? Disinformation? Dissembling? Crowd control? Methods of polling: straw vote, show of hands, ballots,



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group by group, individual tally. Accountability: what is an 'armer?' Swaying the vote. Orchestration. Manipulation.

----TO BE ADDED:

Self-governance could help the US Fellowship thwart attempts to put pressure on our business office by financially powerful opponents of total abstinence. Selling books and making deals for big money is a sad price to pay for damage to the heart of NA. We need to pass on to our newcomers the program that helped save our lives. Maybe making sure the Drug Court system stays an outside issue. Many members do not realize the aggressive side of bureaucracy tends to enlarge itself so as to increase prestige and financial allotments. All that has to happen is a secretary adds an item to the court slip form for the group members phone number and members get used to filling in the blank. First thing you know they hiring someone to call and verify attendance of those sentenced to attend meetings. As we move step by step in this direction, we become even more of an extension of the Drug Court system. Persons inexperienced with self-governance can fall into well-known traps and become the pawns of crowd manipulators. Before we allow things to go too far, we need to get something in writing with time to review and discuss with our friends. A motion needs to be made to put Drug Court activities under H&I. If carried, the H&I people can look out for our interests, carry the message and make it clear while we are there to help, we strictly adhere to our 12 Traditions. Then, when asked to vote, make sure the motions are formulated within the bounds of the information you know about from the information you have received and from your personal experience. These are the types of information we hope will help the NA members in the USA come together, pool resources, and work to increase our common welfare.

