

Proposed motion from Stilson Snow for revision of NA Tree:

"Moved that the passage on page 8 paragraph 2 starting with the words: "For groups purpose..." and ending with the words '...clean and desires membership.', be stricken. Further, that the word "member" in paragraph 4 page 8 in the passage "The gathering of two or more member addicts for the purpose..." be stricken."

Discussion in favor of the motion:

A close reading of the section of the NA Tree entitled "the Member" reveals to me some contradictions of Tradition Three which reads "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using." This is stated in the second sentence of the opening paragraph of the section on the Member. However, in the third and fourth sentence the Tree sets up qualifications that go beyond the third tradition. First the Tree sets up two classes of membership by defining what a member "in good standing is, which automatically assumes there is such a thing as membership not in good standing. The qualifications set up by the Tree for membership in good standing in a group is "living a drug-free life by practicing the principles of Narcotics Anonymous." and "One qualifies by taking the First Step and remains a Group Member as long as he or she is clean and desires membership." I believe this is in direct conflict with Tradition Three which states that the only requirement is a DESIRE to stop using. Just on practical grounds how can a person who for sake of argument, may be clean for a day and who has not yet taken the First Step, be a member of NA but not a member of a Group ? When did it become necessary to be clean to be a member of group ? or of NA ? On the question of taking the First Step as a qualification, how can that be policed ? Will there be a First Step Course with a quiz at the end ? From my own experience I take the First Step at deeper levels the longer I am clean and sober. Just what level constitutes "taking" the First Step ? On a more basic note, the steps are suggested only as I recall. Does NA now wish to dogmatize or institutionalize beliefs ? Quoting from the NA pamphlet: "These are suggested only, but they are the principles that made our recovery possible."

I think anyone with any amount of clean time realizes that the steps are the only way to stay clean and have a life worth living, but to try to force a way of life on someone is not going to work. How many of us have rebelled at something we had to do, that was a requirement ? If we are following the traditions as explained in AA's 12 & 12 the relevant sentence is on page 143 : "You are an "AA member if you say so. You can declare yourself in: nobody can keep you out." Finally, I think in addition to contradicting the traditions and the Big Book and pamphlet, the Tree is complicating membership. The admonition Dr. Bob gave to Bill Wilson just before he died was "Keep it simple," and I think by defining membership we are not keeping it simple.

Proposed motion from Stilson Snow for revision of NA Tree:

"Moved that two sentences on page nine, paragraph two be stricken. They are as follows: "Although most addicts don't want to help out with the work, they are at least willing to delegate this responsibility to someone else. This seems to be part of the nature of the addict."

Discussion in favor of the motion:

I believe that the purpose of the NA Tree is to describe a service structure for Narcotics Anonymous, not a forum for the personal opinions of one or more people on the nature of addicts. Further, I believe that addicts have had enough derogatory things said about them as a group and individually without having their supposed peers condemn them on a totally theoretical basis. The official literature of NA is not the place to express personal resentments, and to institutionalize negative comments about the membership is stupid. I believe the sentences in question are negative, divisive, irrelevant, destructive, of dubious accuracy, and should be stricken.



Proposed motion from Stilson Snow for revision of NA Tree:

"Moved that the titles of Service representatives be changed as follows:

General Service Representative to Group Service Representative Area Service Representative to remain Area Service Representative General Service Delegate to Regional Service Representative."

Discussion in favor of the motion:

This would be simply a matter of changing some words to make more understandable the functions and responsibilities of the people representing the various groups and committees in NA. For instance now we have for the group a General Service Representative, but for the Region, which is two levels up in geographic terms there is a General Service Delegate. The words are too close, and could cause confusion. Also the Tree itself is confused about what to call the GSD. On page 17 it says: "The RSC also elects a Regional Service Delegate..." then on page 19 in bold type as the heading of a section, it calls this person the Gñeneral Service Delegate and refers to him or her as that in that section: then on page 23 it again refers to this person as Regional Service Delegate. I think that all persons representing a group or committee should be identified the same as the body they represent, that is a person who represents a group should be known as a Group representative, a person who represents an Aréa should be known as an Area representative, a person who represents a Region should be known as a Regional representative. Further I believe for clarity they should all be known as either Representatives or Delegates but not designate some people as representatives and some as delegates. The overall effect uner the present titles is simply one of confusion. I believe the titles as proposed would clarify and simplify the Tree.