

# *2020 AWC Traditions*

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWC

PANELISTS AND SKITS:

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## **HALT: Humility, Acceptance, Love, Tolerance**

We practice these principles in all our affairs.

While we intuitively sense that a meeting is not healthy, we often don't know how to communicate it in a way that will be well received. Focusing on the spiritual principles can strengthen our ability to relate to and practice our Traditions when carrying out the business of ACA. Business in particular can trigger our Laundry List traits where we may unconsciously follow our family roles right into dysfunction.

We know what the problem looks like. Growing up in unhealthy families, however, we don't always know what the solution looks like.

My family of origin work, my triggered feelings, the shame and abandonment, were in large part, the role of scapegoat. **Awareness of our family roles** may be helpful to keep in mind if I feel myself getting pulled into a dysfunctional situation.

Applying the solution through our Traditions

What continues to be important to my recovery is employing **curiosity over criticism** and **principles over personalities** allowing me to stay focused on solutions

Step 12 -- The segue to the Traditions.

Carrying the message to others is about our relationships.

*Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

In my search to understand a power greater than myself, I attended churches, went to spiritual retreats, took different courses, read book after book. The more I studied the Traditions, the more I found those spiritual principles to be the guiding forces I was seeking. Just as working the steps is essential to my recovery, the same became true of working The Traditions. Like two sides of one coin I have found without both, my recovery, my serenity ceases to exist. Ignoring the Traditions I fall victim to the flip side of the spiritual principles, narrow-mindedness, divisiveness, exclusion, ego, all that leads to chaos.

UNITY and TRUST. Trust tends to be the common thread that ACA's wrestle with.

**How do we move forward when our past is governed by mistrust?**

Growing up in a family run by dominance and codependence left no room for other voices to be heard or trusted. Generational laundry list traits of people pleasing, approval seeking, giving in to others, fear of criticism, the overdeveloped sense of responsibility, these were the dynamics that prevailed. Relationships were governed by fear, mistrust, leading to such characteristics as self-sufficiency and the compulsion to control.

**Tradition One** states; *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on group unity.*

Tradition One reminds us that our personal recovery is needed to achieve unity.

**How do the Steps guide us to group unity?**

**How did working the Steps make way to trust the spiritual principle of unity in Tradition One?**

*We must avoid a misguided attempt to recreate our dysfunctional family system in the ACA group. Angry or disruptive members are usually acting out their family role, unknowingly reconstructing their dysfunctional family setting. Some of us can relate to this claim. We could avoid working on ourselves by blaming group members for imagined wrongs and slights. The tolerance we found in ACA allowed many of us to change. BRB p. 535*

**What experience would you share with a fellow traveler who is voicing their opinion but dominating and dividing the group?**

Trust, the collective wisdom, and the minority opinion.

*Tradition 2--For our group purposes there is but one authority--a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.*

*The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be. This is a striking and almost unbelievable fact...* The Language of the Heart, Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings p.78

The importance of participation is found in the second and third Traditions. Every member matters! The collective wisdom depends upon the group's willingness to be non-judgemental, to come from love and acceptance of each other. Most of us grew up not being heard, some of us were criticized or humiliated for speaking up. Those true voices are hidden behind shame and the fear of being ridiculed. We have arrived wounded, and often burdened by stigma. **Can we come to a collective wisdom when voices go unheard or discounted?**

The minority opinion may wish to speak after a vote has been taken. The minority takes this opportunity to present new or different information that asks us to reconsider the prevailing vote. This calls on us to listen with a different set of ears. We listen again for the good of the group, committee or fellowship. HALT! This is the opportunity to invite a loving presence into our group decisions.

- How do members feeling too stigmatized or judged to speak affect the group?
- What Tradition does that speak to?  
What about inclusivity and diversity?  
What issues are common to this?  
What about the minority opinion?
- What does it mean when the minority opinion prevails?
- Is it okay if a group makes a bad decision?

## Tradition Four

Each group is at autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other 12 step programs.

Cooperation never seemed to such a relevant spiritual principle as it is to me today. The decisions we make for ourselves right now affect the rest of the world. Taking care of ourselves, or not taking care of ourselves, affects others. This tradition reminds me to inventory how my behavior and decisions affect others.

*The groups are given the freedom to make mistakes..... every group has the unabashed right to be wrong. And when wrong their decision then becomes part of the growth process, both for the meeting and more especially for the meeting members. The group survives and can flourish **if the members are willing to focus on ACA principles and invite a loving God into their decision making processes.** Placing ACA 1st and cooperating with one another is essential for healthy group autonomy. BRB p.511*

*It's funny, but the Fourth Tradition almost began to look like one of the 12 Steps to me. I began caring more about myself because I was part of something....BRB*

*Groups that remain close to the Twelve Steps and Traditions tend to ride out difficult times more smoothly. They tend to survive.*

## Spiritual Principles of our Twelve Traditions:

Anonymity the common thread!

Unity

Trust

Open-mindedness

Cooperation—curiosity over criticism

Equality

Humility

Inclusivity

Service coming from love, gratitude

Singleness of Purpose

Placing principles before personalities



*If you are just joining  
in, what you are  
hearing may be a  
**DYSFUNCTIONAL**  
business meeting skit!  
Stay tuned for the  
healthy version coming  
up next!*



- A dominant personality has taken on two to three service roles, group secretary and treasurer. There is no literature role so the secretary has taken on that as well. She has taken control of the phone list, trifold table and made her own decision on the spending of group funds going against group conscience. She does not include other members or ask for help. She claims the current members are newcomers and not able to have a say or input as they don't know how the program works.
- She has gone against a previous group conscience. Decided funds are dwindling and isn't going to pay for trifolds. She claims they can't measure if the trifolds or phone list make a difference.
- The person speaks to being an old-timer, more experienced and diminishing the members with less time, even though they are more aware of the Traditions.
- She cuts off the other members.
- She refers to the meeting as "Her Meeting".
- Meeting attendance has gone from 20 to 5 members.
- A 4<sup>th</sup> person who says: You guys need to leave things alone. Pauline has been instrumental in keeping this meeting going and should be praised.

How do the Traditions play out in the skits:

TRADITION ONE– Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on unity.

TRADITION TWO – For our group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

TRADITION THREE – The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional family.

TRADITION FIVE - Each group has but one primary purpose- to carry the message to the adult child who still suffers.

TRADITION TWELVE - Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## Questions to consider:

- What about the frequency of the business meetings?
- How is a business meeting determined?
- Introduction of members?
- Does every member get to speak once before a member speaks for a second time?
- Round Robin speaking? Does each member state their opinion?
- What about rotation of service?
- How was principles over personalities applied?
- What if the member continues to dominate the meeting despite agreeing to cooperate?

How do the Traditions play out in the APB skit and in reference to such scenarios?

TRADITION ONE— Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on unity.

TRADITION TWO – For our group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

TRADITION THREE – The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional family.

TRADITION TEN—Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA ought never be drawn into public controversy.

TRADITION TWELVE - Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## Solutions to consider:

*Groups that remain close to the Twelve Steps and Traditions tend to ride out difficult times more smoothly. They tend to survive. Tradition Four BRB p.511.*

- Monthly Tradition Meetings
- Regular Group Inventory
- Safety Statements
- Two or more members approach the member after a meeting with service coming from love
- Ask the person to discuss it with their sponsor
- Approach with curiosity over criticism
- Permission for 3-4 part statements from group members
- Discuss options with a local Intergroup
- Website Best Practices
- Leave the meeting?

## **HALT Hungry, Angry, Lonely Tired/ Humility, Acceptance, Love, Tolerance**

With slogans as a gentle teaching opportunity, would you share a favorite slogan that reminds you stay in touch with the spiritual principles of the Traditions?

- Curiosity over criticism
- Principles before personalities
- Tackle the problem, not the person
- Check your motive
- Change is a process not an event
- Sometimes it not what you say but how you say it
- We are responsible for the effort, not the outcome
- HOW: Honesty, Open-mindedness, Willingness
- Choose kindness