

WORKSHOP ON USING THE 12 TRADITIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Opening:

1. How we met
2. How we were introduced to the idea of using the 12 Traditions as a couple
3. Make it very clear that we are NOT professionals or therapists!
4. Need to throw out old conceptions of FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON and instead live by spiritual principles that will allow each of us to BE THE RIGHT PERSON

Tradition 1: (short form) Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity. (long form) Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows closely afterward.

1. This tradition is all about UNITY. This is the ideal for our family life.
2. Each is a subservient part of the whole.
3. Do we think of ourselves as a unit?
4. Am I willing to make sacrifices?

Tradition 2: (short form only—which is longer) For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

1. There is only one ultimate authority in the house—GOD. No one person wears the pants in the family.
2. No unilateral decision making—no one person making decisions for the whole
3. We are each TRUSTED SERVANTS—each has a job to do.
4. Each trusted servant should be putting in 100%--no 50/50. This gets rid of SCORE KEEPING!
5. In order for our home to have an informed group conscience, there must be honest communication. Some times we disagree on things, but we must have mutual respect.
6. We don't fight! We were also taught not to go to bed angry.

Tradition 3: (short form) The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. (part of long form): *Membership should never depend on money or conformity.*

1. Everyone is equally a family member if you were born into or married into the family—that includes the in-laws
2. Membership is not dependent on money or conformity.
3. We believe membership also involves a COMMITMENT. We each need to be fully invested in making the relationship work.
4. Each needs to have INTEGRITY—which means being of one mind. We can't have one foot IN the relationship and one foot OUT of it.

Tradition 4: (short form) Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. (part of long form) With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience.

1. We are an autonomous family unit with our own group conscience. We can run our home as we see fit.
2. There is no shortage of advice from outside entities: other family members, friends, and society at large. However, at the end of the day, we can make our own decisions.
3. We have the right to be wrong just like an A.A. group does.
4. Each of us has individual autonomy within the family—each of us has our own interests and hobbies. We need to be supportive of one another.
5. However, our individual autonomy should not threaten the unity of the family as a whole.

Tradition 5: (short form) Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. (long form) Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. Our relationship is a spiritual entity.
2. Our marriage is not a CONTRACT that can easily be broken, but rather it is a spiritual union.
3. Even at home we need to fulfill our primary purpose of SERVICE—to each other, to the family at large, and to AA

4. We've extended our service work to AA to include introducing couples to using the 12 Traditions in their relationships.

Tradition 6: (short form) An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

1. This is about separating the material from the spiritual
2. What is the biggest single thing that couples fight about? MONEY
3. We were advised to have only one account for all our money—one pot.
4. The money was now OUR money...and OUR debt.
5. This goes the same for strivings for power or prestige (talk about the decision to go to Yale)

Tradition 7: (short form) Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. (part of long form) Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

1. This has more to do with being SPIRITUALLY self-supporting rather than financially self-supporting.
2. Each member needs to have an individual program.
3. No sponsoring one another!
4. Tell story about Cathy's relapse.

Tradition 8: (short form) Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

1. We do not take a "professional" or "therapeutic" stance on our relationship.
2. We don't have to have an "idealized" vision of what a "healthy" relationship looks like.
3. Places where we get fixed ideas from about our relationship: self-help books, shrinks, counselors, psychics, astrologers, etc.

4. Sometimes outside professional help is needed—there can be a place for it. We've never used it for our relationship, but we did consult a psychologist in order to get ideas of how to better deal with our oldest child when he was having major difficulties.

Tradition 9: (short form) A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. (part of long form) All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

1. We need the least possible organization in our household—which is not to say that there is NO organization
2. There should be universal respect in the household—everyone has a job.
3. Be careful NOT to keep score on whether the other person is doing his/her job.
4. We need to have flexibility.
5. NO CONTRACTS—tell story about the “contract” proposed after Cathy’s relapse

Tradition 10: (short form) Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

1. Our opinions on outside issues are not allowed to disrupt family unity.
2. This has a lot to do with GOSSIP—we do not slander our partners outside home, in AA, at work, etc.
3. We try to be our partner’s biggest champions outside the home—always be on their side
4. Some couple choose to have different home groups so that they feel comfortable SHARING about their problems in the home. We’ve always had the same homegroup—we were taught to bring our problems to our sponsors and our solutions to our home group.
5. Problems with our partners are kept to sponsors and very close confidants.
6. We also should not act in a way outside the home that is disrespectful to our partners—shouldn’t do anything we wouldn’t do if they were right behind us

Tradition 11: (short form) Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. (part of long form) Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

1. We need to be a power of attraction not only within AA but also in our personal lives.
2. Dennis and Barbara had an OPEN home and encouraged us to “open up our homes and let folks see how we live”
3. We’ve had many sponsees say that they asked us to sponsor them because of the kind of marriage that we have—POWER OF ATTRACTION

Tradition 12: (short form) Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. (long form) And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

1. For years we thought that this Tradition was about putting spiritual principles above OTHERS’ screwed-up personalities! NOT TRUE
2. We must put spiritual principles before OUR OWN personalities—our own personalities or SELVES is what wants to kill us and destroy everything good in our lives.
3. HUMILITY—our egos can use our blessings to destroy us