

Traditions Checklist from the AA Grapevine – originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November, 1969 and ran through September, 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion. (Note: AA, alcohol and alcoholic replaced for OA, food and compulsive eater in these questions.)

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive OA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting OA in one place with OA in another?
5. Do I put down some OA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of OA?
6. Am I informed about OA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, OA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of OA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough OA meetings or read enough OA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share OA of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

Tradition Two: 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. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, OA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with OA Twelfth Step jobs or other OA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my OA jobs? Praise for my OA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been abstinent for a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at OA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

Tradition Three: The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new OA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of compulsive eater whom I privately do not want in my OA group?
3. Do I set myself up as judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over impressed by a celebrity – by a doctor, clergyman, ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at an OA meeting needing information or help (even when he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he has been to OA before? What his other problems are?

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.

1. Do I insist that there are only a few *right* ways of doing things in OA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of OA . . . nearby groups . . . loners in Alaska . . . internationalists miles from port . . . a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in OA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths – his lengths, not mine – to stay abstinent?
6. Do I share my knowledge of OA tools with other members who may not have heard them?

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the compulsive eater who still suffers.

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me?"
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the *limitations* of OA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any OA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow compulsive eater?
4. Am I willing to Twelfth Step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that OA old-timers, too, can be compulsive eaters who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

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

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several OA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for OAs familiar with "Guidelines on Clubs" (which is available free from AA GSO)?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on compulsive eating?
5. Some compulsive eaters will stay around OA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?

Tradition Seven: Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help OA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can't afford it yet? How generous was I with myself when eating compulsively?
2. Should Lifeline sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it could make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full color, at a cheaper price per copy?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be okay to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group's treasurer's report unimportant OA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?

Tradition Eight: Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

1. Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward – even if not money – for my personal OA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in OA like an expert on compulsive eating? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On OA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on *humility*?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what OA employees do? What workers in other eating disorders programs do? Can I distinguish clearly between them?
6. In my own OA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*? To the pamphlet *AA Tradition - How It Developed*?

Tradition Nine: OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

1. Do I still try to boss things in OA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of OA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the OA program – even if no one makes me do so – with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any OA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any OA job?
6. Why doesn't every OA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an OA job gracefully – and profit thereby – when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

Tradition Ten: Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really *is* an "OA opinion" on any issue? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Binge foods? The federal or state government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? AA? Al-anon? Alateen?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression that I am stating the "OA opinion"?
3. What in AA history gave rise to the Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own OA life?
5. What would OA be like without this tradition? Where would I be?
6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside of OA? Inside OA?

Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television and other public media of communication.

1. Do I sometimes promote OA so fanatically that I make it seem *unattractive*?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as an OA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing OA names around – even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, compulsive eater?
5. What would OA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Is my OA abstinence attractive enough that a sick compulsive eater would want such a quality for himself?

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all OA members before individual welfare? What happens to *me* if OA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust OA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other OAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stop eating compulsively?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain OA group to conform to *my* standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an OA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is *my* part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition – or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can to support OA financially? When was the last time I anonymously gave away a Lifeline subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain OAs' behavior – especially if they are paid to work for OA? Who made *me* so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all OA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give OA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my OA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another compulsive eater (and therefore me)? Is my brand of OA so attractive that other compulsive eaters want it?
12. What is the real importance of *me* among many thousands of OA members?