

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 films.

As nicotine addicts our lives were out of control and unmanageable. We used nicotine to the extreme. One was not enough; thousands were not enough. We saw no problem in the extremes we went to in order to get and maintain a daily supply of nicotine. Our behavior with nicotine, whether inhaling it or chewing it, lacked boundaries as our smoke, butts, or spit polluted the environs wherever we went.

Like many of the principles of our program, Tradition Eleven guides us in our recovery to have appropriate limits when we "carry the message" to those outside of our fellowship. The integrity and longevity of our fellowship depends on this time-tested principle. Certainly we want people to know about what we offer. However, it is essential that the focus remain on the program rather than the personalities within the fellowship. We want people *attracted* to our program because of its principles, not because of who is in it. Anonymity not only protects the individual, it protects the program from the human shortcomings we all have.

Anonymity is not a matter for each member to determine for himself or herself. If a member was to think: "I don't care if the public knows I am a nicotine Anonymous member, I have nothing to hide" this would be overlooking that this is a "WE" program, not a "ME" program. Nicotine Anonymous' spiritual principles include humility, which is essential to our recovery. Consider if one member grabs the spotlight, then others may become jealous or try to compete. This would erode unity. Additionally Nicotine Anonymous members ought to remain mindful that, although we are not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous (and other 12-step fellowships), we are part of a recovery community sharing this program and we need to show our respect and gratitude by honoring this Tradition for the sake of all.

The media is filled with advertisements using celebrities to make personal endorsements of products. The ads may be effective for those corporations, but there are risks. If that personality "falls from grace" or one's "pedestal" becomes a target for the press, the situation could reflect poorly on the company or product. Nicotine Anonymous acknowledges relapses are a reality from which no member is immune. Nicotine Anonymous accepts the wisdom learned by Alcoholics Anonymous - promotions highlighting *the person* are not the best way for us to carry the message.

Many newcomers hear about us by word of mouth from other members or by local meeting notices inviting anyone with a desire to stop using nicotine to come to a meeting. Publicity in various forms has also been an important way for the nicotine addict who still suffers to hear about Nicotine Anonymous. Early in our organization's history, a member wrote a *Reader's Digest* story about our program and the article significantly raised public awareness of our existence. Also columns in *Dear Abby* and *Ann Landers* referring to our fellowship caught many an I. These were not examples of self-promotion because they kept the focus on the fellowship.

There are many ways to appropriately publicize what we offer. NAWS has pamphlets suitable for outreach efforts such as "Introducing Nicotine Anonymous," "To the Newcomer and Sponsorship in Nicotine Anonymous," and "Introducing Nicotine Anonymous to the Medical Profession." Nicotine Anonymous World Services also has CDs with a public service announcement that members can ask local radio stations to broadcast. Some other examples are as follows: local meeting announcements placed in newspapers and on palm cards; information provided to local chapters of national health organizations; Nicotine Anonymous literature presented at health fairs or offered to the offices of health professionals and hospitals.

If a member were to write a book or be interviewed by public media there are some appropriate options. Individuals can use their full name if they forgo mentioning they are Nicotine Anonymous members and simply identify themselves as nicotine addicts. If individuals are identifying themselves as Nicotine Anonymous members, the other option would be to conceal their faces and use first names only.

Many of our members did not show up to a meeting the first time they heard about it or work the Steps the first time they read them. They could not be "sold" this program, they had to become ready. The best way we carry this message is by our sharing our experience, strength, and hope at meetings, serving in outreach efforts, by frankly explaining what capital Nicotine Anonymous is about, and by living the results of our spiritual awakening by practicing program principles in our daily lives. If what Nicotine Addicts see and hear *attracts* them, they will find our warm welcome.

Out of respect for others, we do not tell people that they *need our program* or what they *should* do. We do not ensure everyone a "guarantee of success." We are not selling, we are showing.

Faith and humility are spiritual principles, and to remain a spiritual program, we need to practice faith and humility in our public relations policy.

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