

TRADITION FIVE

Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the nicotine addict who still suffers.

In itself, this Tradition carries a message to all group members. First, members of each group, acting as a unified whole, have *one primary purpose* to fulfill. Second, we have a valuable *message* that we are to share. Third, to whom we are to carry this message is specifically identified -- *the nicotine addict who still suffers*.

At a group level, we communicate our message both in the meaning of our words as well as the manner of our actions. Having a primary purpose serves us like a guiding star, letting us know when we are on course. With recovery comes a newfound enthusiasm which can lead members of a group to try to be many things to many people. A group need take care not to become diluted or distracted regarding its sense of purpose.

Our experience with nicotine and recovery is what we know best. Sharing our story does not require special talents or training. We can each offer what we know and have come to believe. Carrying the message is also accomplished without speaking, when we quietly listen to our fellow members. By focusing on our primary purpose, a group increases the likelihood of acting in good faith toward our principles and maintaining unity in the process. In this simplicity, there is strength.

As a fellowship, we understand this spiritual principle: in order to keep the recovery we have received we need to keep giving this *gift* away to others who still suffer. To ignore this truth, we risk a relapse as individuals and risk the preservation of the group. This is a mission of love spreading out to members either still in the grip of nicotine or struggling with other aspects of their recovery.

Although we are a program grounded in anonymity, we do not grow in the dark. This love is also expressed in our outreach efforts to those who have not yet heard about our program. Carrying the message is our recovery in action. We look to act in a manner that attracts others that they may be granted the same peace we seek. Our warm welcome opens our hearts and keeps us from the isolation of addiction. A newcomer's struggle helps

remind us of where we have come from, ever deepening our gratitude for another day free from nicotine.

Nicotine Anonymous has five tools to help us live nicotine-free. The five tools are: meetings, phone/email list, literature, sponsorship, and service. The tools are also a means by which we can carry our message to others who seek help. Meetings carry the message by reminding us to turn our attention toward the solution rather than the problem. In this, there is hope and strength. Sharing provides an opportunity for newcomers to identify with others' past experience as they hear and see possibilities for change. They witness honesty and hope in a safe and supportive setting. The firsthand message our members offer is unique and powerful.

A group's phone list grows whenever a member becomes willing to add his or her name and offer support between meetings. This list is especially important to the still suffering addict whose desire to get free may struggle to be heard above the nagging of nicotine.

Newcomers not yet comfortable speaking at meetings may find more ease using other such forms of communication. We have a gentle message that each may heed at his or her own pace.

Our literature is written by members, reviewed by trusted servants, and deemed official by delegates to vote at our annual Conferences to ensure that it carries our message. Our experience is available in several forms such as pamphlets, books, CDs, and MP3s. World Services and some intergroups publish newsletters where members contribute their individual experience as well. We know that if we do not reach out to those still suffering we risk stagnating and having no vital purpose.

Sponsorship is the personal embodiment of the principal for how one keeps his or her recovery by kindly giving it away to a sponsee. Sponsors carry the message by sharing the journey of recovery on a one-to-one basis, by listening with care, and by demonstrating through action how Nicotine Anonymous works.

Service is our gratitude in action. Doing service carries our message of commitment and responsibility. Service can also carry our message as a means of making amends and showing we have improved our behavior or attitude. Members who serve become role models, often stretching beyond former fears and limitations in order to fulfill our primary purpose.

Having a primary purpose keeps the intent of our message simple and clear, which may lesson whatever suspicions those still suffering might have about a group. Many of us had doubts

and fears about joining groups when we first arrived. For example, newcomers may have concerns about religious issues when they learn we are a spiritually based program. It is imperative that we honor Our Preamble regarding Nicotine Anonymous not being allied with any religious or political organization.

By appropriately carrying our message, each group shows the still suffering nicotine addict we care and what is possible when not under the influence of nicotine. A primary purpose provides us with a focus that reminds us to recognize and value priorities. All this and more reveals the full dimension of our recovery message.

*The Twelve Traditions reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Traditions does not mean that AA is affiliated with this program. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism -- use of the Twelve Traditions in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.