

TRADITION NINE

Nicotine Anonymous as such ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

At first, this statement may pose a paradox about our program. If we have no organization, then how is it that we have our intergroups, World Service office, board, and committees? Are these not examples of organization? Without organization, will we not have in anarchy?

Well, yes, we do have anarchy. Anarchy is the absence of government, and we certainly have no government. However, what we do have are servants, staff, and volunteers who serve the entirety of our fellowship. Whether we speak of a telephone volunteer, an officer of the board, or paid office assistant, each works to serve the needs of the fellowship in general and individual numbers upon request.

There is actually great comfort to be derived from this lack of structure. The leaders of each group, committee, or board are there to serve the members, not to dictate or impose their will. No one can tell any member or group what they must do. Like the Steps, our guidelines and Traditions are suggestions. In the experience of many of our members, not working the Steps has had extreme consequences, often leading to relapse. The same is true of our Traditions. We have often seen that non-adherence to the Traditions lead to a group's demise. Even so, we can only make suggestions based on our experience of how other groups dealt with similar situations. There is no enforcement or judicial branch of our fellowship. In fact, it is the servants and leaders who have to answer to the members and groups of Nicotine Anonymous.

Groups, intergroups, and World Services each set their own parameters for choosing its servants and leaders. There may be a simple rotation of commitments or a formal election of officers. Those elected or chosen derive their authority solely from those who have selected them. They are charged with the task of serving the fellowship in line with the principles of the program and to uphold the Twelve Traditions of Nicotine Anonymous.

In the early days, groups existed without regional intergroups or a World Services office. Today, these regional committees and World Services provide essential services such as printing meeting lists, distributing literature, answering phones and correspondence, and spreading the message of our fellowship wherever possible. World Services prints all Conference-approved literature. Over the years the services have proved essential to our fellowship's existence and our personal recovery. Most of us could not imagine the program without them.

When our volunteers truly embrace the humble principles of service, fellowship, and selflessness, there is no need to grab vainly for the powers of control, prestige, and selfishness. A spirit of cooperation and a singleness of purpose are all that is necessary to provide Nicotine Anonymous with its unique structure of service, fellowship, and recovery.

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