

TRADITION SEVEN

Every Nicotine Anonymous group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

One clear function of this Tradition is to guide how we accept monetary contributions only from our members and not from any outside contributors, no matter how well-meaning those offers may be. This way each group maintains its autonomy and our fellowship remains independent. It is vital that we do not accept any outside contributions, lest we become dependent on that outside individual or group for our survival. Our survival needs to be determined by our own contributions; otherwise we may become involved in outside issues and politics. These other agendas could weaken and confuse our message, threatening or even ending our mission.

Early in the life of a particular Nicotine Anonymous group, the group was very graciously offered a meeting place free of charge. Several members argued that being a small group, survival depended on accepting that offer. However, through a group conscience, it was determined that in order for the group to maintain its autonomy, it would have to decline this very generous offer. Instead, they decided to negotiate a monthly "donation" in return for a meeting room. The group realized this was a vital decision that protected the integrity of our message and honored this Tradition of our fellowship. Even if it meant this one meeting might close without outside contributions, the group was willing to accept that possibility.

Looking more deeply into this Tradition, we cannot be totally self-supporting without each of us contributing service to our group, intergroup, and World Services. Service is not only one of the tools of personal recovery, it is the life blood for our entire fellowship. If we only *take* from the fellowship, we no longer *make* a fellowship. Whenever any one of us is content to sit back and let "someone else" make the necessary commitments, the existence of a group, and eventually Nicotine Anonymous itself is threatened.

Self-supporting through service means actions such as attending both group and business meetings on a regular basis,

sharing at meetings, working the Steps, sponsoring people, setting up and cleaning up meetings, subscribing and contributing to fellowship newsletters, as well as taking on chairperson, treasurer, or secretary positions. Self-supporting service, as much or more than monetary contributions, will ensure our continued ability to serve all nicotine users who seek our help. Thus, by honoring this Tradition, we maintain our primary purpose and the spiritual foundation upon which our fellowship is based.

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