

TRADITION SIX

A Nicotine Anonymous group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the Nicotine Anonymous name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

At the turn of the 21st century, this Tradition was referenced in decisions made about linking our web page to web pages of other organizations. Some members felt that linking would imply affiliation. This Tradition allows us to *cooperate* with outside entities, but not to *affiliate*. To discern the difference between those two words (*cooperate* and *affiliate*) was a challenge for some Nicotine Anonymous members.

Some members wanted us to throw caution to the wind and to link up to any and everything that had anything to do with nicotine cessation. Some felt it would "only be fair" because many organizations send us referrals. However, as of this writing, our group conscience has decided to have our webpage make mention of other resources, but not provide links to those sites. We have also decided that other sites can have links to us, but we will not provide reciprocal things to them.

We see other organizations help people to quit smoking and some of their "graduates" come into our rooms. Some of our members have wondered why we shouldn't merge with them and take advantage of some of their infrastructure. Or, if that is out of order, they wonder why we can't at least endorse them, especially in cities and towns where we don't have any meetings. People are always asking for the names and phone numbers of rehabs where people can go for a week of nicotine abstinence. Some of our members have wondered if we should send them to the Nicotine Anonymous web page so they can click on a link to get the information they so desperately need. These members have asked, "Isn't that helping the still suffering addict?" Tradition Six tells us that this is not the way our program will help them. Tradition Six helps us to *keep it simple* and to have appropriate,

yet useful relationships with other organizations on a fellowship wide level.

Although each party starts as a separate entity when a relationship is established, there occurs (either in actuality or perception) an inevitable blending of identities and/or policies. The difficulty for us would exist if, for example, we were to form such a relationship with another organization. While both may have the common interest of good health and spirituality, the affiliation would have each organization losing some of its original character and specialty. Tradition Six protects us from diluting what we are and what we do. Tradition Six maintains our fellowship's unique ability to help the nicotine addict who still suffers.

We recognize that people do have other problems and members should be able to inform other members about resources where they might seek additional assistance without the risk of our fellowship becoming affiliated with those other groups. For example, people often gain some weight when they quit smoking. On a personal basis, there is nothing wrong with sharing information about another fellowship or organization that could be of further help to a fellow member, but for our fellowship to officially affiliate with that other group or organization would be a major mistake.

During the 1980s, one of our members was contacted by a drug company which was producing a nicotine gum to help people quit smoking. The company was going to offer us a much needed toll free number along with a person who would maintain a database of our worldwide meeting list. This service would have been completely free to us. In exchange, we would have been required to put this company's literature on our literature table with our own conference-approved literature. It was a tempting deal, but thanks to the wisdom of Tradition Six we declined their offer.

We have a very powerful safety valve in the form of Tradition Six. Helping the still suffering addict is our primary purpose. Tradition Six helps our fellowship focus our efforts on that essential task and avoid becoming diverted or diluted by an outside enterprise or even a related facility.

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