

## Tradition 5 // Twelve and Twelve Notes

### **Short Form:**

“Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**Long Form:** Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

### **Tradition Five Checklist**

From the Grapevine, November 1969

- Do I ever cop out by saying, “I’m not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn’t apply to me”?
- Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
- Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
- Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
- Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
- Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

### **Questions**

1. What is the message of Alcoholics Anonymous? What do they mean by each group carrying “its message”?
2. How willing am I to work with new member’s, regardless of whether I like them or not?
3. What is the fifth tradition asking us to sacrifice?
4. When at a meeting am I there to bring something? Or do I look to see what I can get? Do I go just to fellowship and see friends, or to carry the message and help the suffering alcoholic?
5. Do I help my group fulfill its primary purpose through active membership, helping with the chores of the group, welcoming attendees, thinking of how to better the group, or do I sit back and let others do the work?

### **Scenarios**

1. An alcoholic you are sponsoring is constantly asking for rides and money. He is not too excited about working the steps. What do you do?
2. A visitor to AA has a problem with issues outside of alcoholism and does NOT have a drinking problem. However, they like AA and want to be part of the group and want you to sponsor them. What do you do?

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**Bestow** To give or confer; to impart; -- with on or upon. (p151)

**Bore** To push forward in a certain direction with laborious effort. (p152)

**Conscience-stricken** Made uneasy by a guilty conscience. (p151)

**D.T.'s (Delirium Tremens)** A psychotic condition typical of withdrawal in chronic alcoholics, involving tremors, hallucinations, anxiety, and disorientation. (p152)

**Eloquence** Fluent, forcible, elegant, and persuasive speech in public; (p151)

**Foursquare** Squarely and solidly (p153)

**Legacy** A gift of property by will, esp. of money or personal property; a bequest. Also Fig.; as, a legacy of dishonor or disease. (p151)

**Obstinate** persistent; not yielding to reason, arguments, or other means; stubborn; pertinacious; -- usually implying unreasonableness. (p151)

**Obliged** To bind by some favor rendered; to place under a debt; (p153)

**Paradox** an assertion or sentiment seemingly contradictory, or opposed to common sense; (p151)

**Proselytizing** To convert to some religion, system, opinion, or the like; (p153)

**Radiance** Beaming with vivacity and happiness; as, a radiant face. (p150)

**Unremitting** Not remitting; incessant; continued; persevering; (p151)

### From: *Language of the Heart*, p223

"Our first duty, as a society, is to insure our own survival. Therefore we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity. An AA group, as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world.

"Sobriety - freedom from alcohol - through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an AA group....We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our AA groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

### From: *Pass it On*, p366

The Washingtonian Society was an organization that flourished in the 1840's but quickly failed because of some of its own practices. Bill Wrote: "At first, the society was composed entirely of alcoholics trying to help one another. The early members foresaw that they should dedicate themselves to this sole aim...Had they been left to themselves, and had they stuck to their one goal, they might have found the rest of the answer abolition of slavery, for example, was a stormy political issue then. Soon, Washingtonian speakers violently and publicly took sides on this question. [They] completely lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics." Bill saw Traditions Ten and Five as A.A.'s safeguards against the Washingtonians' fate.

**Of Interest:** the "Irishman" in the story in this chapter MAY be Hank P., AA #2 in New York, also mentioned in the Doctor's Opinion on Page XXIX as the man Dr. Silkworth described who seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration.