

Tradition II

SHORT FORM: 'FOR OUR GROUP PURPOSE THERE IS BUT ONE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY—A LOVING GOD AS HE MAY EXPRESS HIMSELF IN OUR GROUP CONSCIENCE. OUR LEADERS ARE BUT TRUSTED SERVANTS; THEY DO NOT GOVERN.'

LONG FORM: 'FOR OUR GROUP PURPOSE THERE IS BUT ONE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY—A LOVING GOD AS HE MAY EXPRESS HIMSELF IN OUR GROUP CONSCIENCE.'

Make a list of areas of your life, e.g.

Home
Work
AA
Friends
Other

Ask, with each of these areas (where relevant):

- Do I really trust that God is loving?
- Do I really trust that God speaks through others?
- Do I use outside structures (e.g. sponsorship, friendship) to try to control the group?
- Do I respect the group conscience, or do I rebel, sulk, undermine, and plot?
- Do I believe I am indispensable in God's plan?
- Do I act like a trusted servant, a lone ranger, or a swaggering boss?
- Do I place group welfare above my own ambitions?
- Am I a benign dictator, a bleeding deacon, or an elder statesman?
- Within the group, do I give spiritual advice, judge, and order?
- Do I move on to another group when necessary?
- Do I aim for the best over the good?

With each question, ask: (1) What is going on? (2) Where am I at fault? (3) What is my corrective measure?

Tradition II prayers:

'God, please have me trust you and others.'

'God, please have me be one with others, not above, not below.'

'God, how can I serve You?'

Tradition II quotations

'no A.A. can give another a directive and enforce obedience' (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

'The elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group's decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgment, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments. ... Theirs is the quiet opinion, the sure knowledge and humble example that resolve a crisis. ... They do not drive by mandate; they lead by example.' (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

'The bleeding deacon is one who is just as surely convinced that the group cannot get along without him, who constantly connives for re-election to office, and who continues to be consumed with self-pity' (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

'The committee gives no spiritual advice, judges no one's conduct, issues no orders.' (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

'The good is the enemy of the best.' (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

'Being the founder, he is at first the boss. Who else could be? Very soon, though, his assumed authority to run everything begins to be shared with the first alcoholics he has helped. At this moment, the benign dicta-

tor becomes the chairman of a committee composed of his friends. ... the founder and his friends may bask a little in glory. They say to one another, 'Perhaps it would be a good idea if we continue to keep a firm hand on AA in this town. After all, we are experienced. Besides, look at all the good we've done these drunks. They should be grateful!' ' (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

'Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs.' (*Alcoholics Anonymous*)

'Under Tradition Two, the group conscience is the final authority for AA world service, and it will always remain so respecting all the larger issues that confront us. Nevertheless the AA groups have recognized that for world service purposes the "group conscience of AA" as a totality has certain limitations. It cannot act directly in many service matters, because it cannot be sufficiently informed about the problems in hand. It is also true that during a time of great disturbance the group conscience is not always the best possible guide because, temporarily, such an upset may prevent it from functioning efficiently or wisely. When, therefore, the group conscience cannot or should not act directly, who does act for it?

The second part of Tradition Two provides us with the answer when it describes AA leaders as "trusted servants." These servants must always be in readiness to do for the groups what the groups obviously cannot or should not do for themselves. Consequently the servants are bound to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uninformed or biased group opinion.' (*Introduction to Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W.*)