

BOB L.

TRADITIONS OF 12 STEP PROGRAMS

NB: Bob has 48 years in Al-Anon and more than 30 years in Overeaters Anonymous.

Introductory remarks before lunch

The Steps teach self-love; the Traditions teach us to love each other.

Service is for God, rather than for the self. Spiritual reality is, in fact, more practical than “practical matters”.

“God is my Employer”. We can depend on Him if trust is there. When we give service in any manner, we will be reimbursed for that service.

The Traditions are to the Group as the Steps are to the Individual.

Higher Power does not reveal Itself through intellect, but through intuition.

Faithlessness is a character defect of the 7th Step; the 3rd Step is a decision, where we put God under obligation.

The Traditions ask us to stay away from extremes and to carry the Message. It is the Message that helps people.

In the 1800’s, the Washingtonian Movement, a fellowship similar in certain respects to Alcoholics Anonymous, became widely popular, only to die out when they became involved with policies beyond the recovery of individual alcoholics.

Program = Message + Structure. Without structure, the message dies. In AA, Bill W. was “the structure guy”; Dr. Bob was the “message guy”. “What’s in it for me” is inconsistent with the structure.

If you love your program enough, you get involved in service.

We need to experience the Traditions.

Once you know, you will never again not know.

Meetings usually fold because they violate Traditions. In Al-Anon, the GSR is responsible for pointing out violations of Traditions. Everyone always feels that only other people break Traditions.

The Traditions taught Bob L. that people can disagree without being disagreeable.

Tradition I:

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon UA unity.

Unity need not be uniformity. However, we must adhere to the common denominator of the First Step. Since not everyone is powerless over any particular issue, any given Fellowship is not for everyone. Observance of the other Traditions will lead to unity, a unity that will have nothing to do with gender, race, age, or sexual orientation. These Traditions will help our groups maintain harmony and thus help ourselves.

But are we willing to pay the price?

“Worry is the unconscious desire to fail.”

Tradition II:

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as is expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.

Tradition III:

The only requirement for UA membership is a desire to stop underearning

Both of these Traditions emphasize the singleness of purpose discussed above.

Tradition IV:

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or UA as a whole.

Bob L. noted no change has ever been made without somebody disagreeing.

Tradition V:

Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry the message to the underearner who still suffers.

Again a reminder regarding singleness of purpose – and that purpose is to help other Underearners. We also carry the message by helping ourselves. We don’t give advice; we share. A distinction needs to be made between sympathy, *i.e.* identification with others, and compassion, *i.e.* feeling for others.

We cannot make others get involved in service.

Tradition VI:

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

God, not money, is the answer. In fact, money is sometimes the problem.

“We trust our car more than we trust God.”

Everything is OK.

Every experience is a spiritual experience.

(break for lunch)

Introductory remarks after lunch

Self-worth is not arrogance or self-importance. The 7th Step is the removal of defects, including the lack of a sense of self-worth.

There are no failures.

Tradition VII:

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

Most people think in terms of money and time. Giving of these shows that a member cares enough to contribute. They show their gratitude by their actions. Gratitude is a verb, not a noun

Tradition VIII:

Underearners Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Professionals are responsible for results; we are responsible for our effort. We are not necessarily paid in money for our service.

Tradition IX:

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

OK, but we need some organization. The “higher up” you are in the Fellowship, the more you are, in fact, a servant.

Love is the power; beauty is the result.

Failure to love God is the cause of self-pity and depression.

Tradition X:

Underearners Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the UA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Meetings or programs fail because of focus on outside issues, which will divide us.

Tradition XI:

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

Nevertheless, we need to let people know we exist!

Tradition XII:

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

True humility is found in anonymity. It's not the speaker, it's the message.

Anonymity is the basis of our structure.