

Tradition Five: What A Group "Ought" To Be

An AA says we can't transmit what we don't have. The first thing Tradition Five tells us is what a group is, or at least "ought to be."

We are not a sociological entity, although sociologists find us fascinating. We are not a therapy group, although remarkable healing takes place among us. And we are not a religion, even though some people want to see us as such.

We are a spiritual entity, or at least "ought to be."

To me, that means that, although we are not saints, we "ought to" strive for spiritual progress. We follow a spiritual path laid out for us by Bill, Bob, and the first one hundred members of Alcoholics Anonymous. That spiritual path consists of the Twelve Steps, and by later development, the Twelve Traditions. They are suggestions only, but very firm suggestions--norms for our spiritual progress. We are a Fellowship of men and women who ought to come together as a spiritual entity.

We deal with two things here: our being and our doing. Clearly, what we are is going to have a lot to do with what we do. And what we do is going to have a strong influence on what we are

We shake our heads at the "Two-Steppers" who, still on the First Step, take it upon themselves to run around "Twelfth-Stepping" whomever they can corner. We know they have not acquired a solid enough foundation in AA spirituality to pass it on to others. They forget the old saying: *nemo dat quod non habet* (No one can give what he doesn't have). Soon, without the gratification of instant success, discouragement sets in. The Two-Stepper must learn to be spiritual first, or give in to discouragement and quit AA

Can this happen to a group? I think it can. When individuals in a group neglect the spiritual program of Alcoholics Anonymous and come to the meetings as if they were "fellowship" and nothing more; or when they dilute the meeting to focus on other things, or disparage spirituality, thinking it's the intrusion of religion; then, as a group, they stop being a spiritual entity. The group gets its spirituality from its members

What does this mean to me personally? It means that my AA spirituality is the very foundation of my sobriety. The group will be as spiritual as its members are spiritual

So my spiritual condition strengthens or weakens the spirituality of the group. Therefore, it increases or lessens our chances for survival as a group, and our chances for sobriety as individuals in the group.

Besides taking good care of my own spirituality, I try to encourage activity that might strengthen the spirituality of the group, such as Twelfth Step workshops. Weekend events can become very popular and even traditional occasions in the life of the group. Whatever strengthens the spirituality of the group strengthens my spirituality, and vice versa. Whatever does that, increases my chances of staying sober, and at the same time, helps me and the group to remain focused on our primary purpose.

By: Anonymous

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