

A Workshop on SA's 12 Traditions

This “group action learning” workshop is designed to help members to gain experience with the 12 Traditions of SA through interactive engagement. Participants become familiar with the 12 Traditions in both their short and long forms, work in groups to answer a number of specific questions and finally apply the Traditions to certain actual scenarios. Experience of developing a group conscience and dealing with minority opinion is also gained. The Workshop can be run as a whole day event studying multiple scenarios, with suitable breaks, or can be compressed into about 3 hours.

Learning by doing as part of a group is a highly effective way to gain experience with the Traditions. The workshop can be run for any number of participants without the need for an expert facilitator. You are welcome to run it for your own SA home group or Intergroup whenever you wish.

Methodology

1. Each attendee is provided with a personal copy of the [short and long forms of the Traditions laid out in parallel](#) and studies these individually (10 minutes).
2. Attendees are randomly allocated to one of twelve “Tradition Study Groups” (TSD) and, sitting in those groups, introduce themselves to each other, as they would at an SA meeting (10 minutes).
3. Group members share what they have noticed during their individual study of the Traditions (10 minutes).
4. Each TSD is given a different slip of paper containing questions about one of the 12 Traditions, taken from the list below and invited to answer the questions related to that Tradition. Once all TSDs have completed all questions for their allocated Tradition this phase ends. TSDs which finish their allocated questions early are assigned a second (or third) Tradition to study, until all are ready to move ahead. (c. 1 Hour)
5. Having developed some understanding, each TSD is considered to be the primary advocate for its Tradition for the remainder of the workshop. Each TSD then presents its Tradition, its questions and its answers to all of the remaining groups. (c. 30 minutes).
6. All TSDs are now asked to consider one of the Traditions Scenarios listed below and to come up with a group solution. (30 minutes).
7. Each TSD takes two minutes to present its solution to the whole assembly. Two or more possible solutions usually emerge. These are recorded. (30 minutes).
8. Groups which have presented a minority opinion are invited to persuade the majority to change their decision. (c. 10 minutes).
9. Once substantial unanimity has been obtained, and if time allows, additional scenarios are considered.

Tradition 1

Why do we need unity?

Why should our common welfare come first?

What would happen if we put personal welfare first?

What comes first, newcomer or group?
What is disruptive behaviour?
Can we invite someone to leave a meeting and, if so, how?
A disunited SA group is in danger of splitting into two. What should be done/not done?
Does the production of two united groups justify the splitting of one disunited group?
Can we gossip about other groups?
What reduces unity?
How best can we live and work together as groups?
Is individualism lost in conformity?
How may we distinguish freedom from licence?

Tradition 2

Where does SA get its direction?
Is the group conscience always right?
What is an informed group conscience?
How could we know that a loving G-d was active in our group conscience?
How would we know that G-d was absent?
What is the role of literature/traditions/concepts/guidelines in informing the group conscience?
What is a steering committee and how does one work?
Do we have leaders in SA and if so, who are they?
What are the various leadership roles in SA?
Who do we turn to?
Can we demand respect?

Tradition 3

What are the membership regulations in SA?
Are there any conditions for membership?
Can we exclude any person?
Can we exclude any service body?
What might be sufficient reasons for exclusion?
What is the link between intolerance and fear?

Tradition 4

What does autonomy mean?
What can we do and not do as individual members?
What can we do and not do as groups?
What things might affect other groups or SA as a whole.
What is "a spiritual entity"?
Is liberty of action dangerous and, if so, why?
What is an outside interest or enterprise and what is not?
What are the signs that groups are breaking boundaries?

Tradition 5

What will dilute our focus?
What are the elements of identification?
What is the message we are to carry?
How can we best carry the message?

Can we carry the message in silence?
What does not count as carrying the message?
Who is "the still suffering sexaholic"?

Tradition 6

What is an SA group? What is a meeting?
What is meant by endorsement?
Can we endorse excellence in others?
Can announcements be endorsements?
To which good causes is it proper to lend the SA name?
What are some examples of outside agencies
What's wrong with money?
How might we be diverted my money, property or prestige?
How can we divide the material from the spiritual?

Tradition 7

Where can our money come from?
Where can our money not come from?
To whom do SA funds belong?
Can a group become insolvent?
In SA, what does financial responsibility look like?
Could SA be sponsored?
How shall we know whether our group's current financial reserve is prudent?

Tradition 8

When can 12th Step work be paid for?
Could SA function without paid workers?
Can an SA member become a paid worker? If so, should he/she be preferred in recruitment?
Can we pay below market wages to our special workers?
Can sex-therapists make money from SA members?
How can wearing two hats be done successfully?

Tradition 9

What is SA, as such?
What bits of SA are organized?
What is SA's structure?
Who issues the directives in SA?
What are the disciplinarians in SA?
What is meant by rotation of service?

Tradition 10

What sort of things are "outside issues"?
How does SA deal with these?
When might we fight and for what?
How might we fight?
Should SA remain a benign anarchy with a light behind a bushel?

Tradition 11

Is anonymity namelessness or sacrifice?

Do good public relations matter in SA?

What do we wish to publicise?

Can we say, "Come to meeting in September and get a free White Book?"

Is anonymity necessary below the level of press, radio, TV, etc?

Why is anonymity important for people in recovery?

Tradition 12

What are the "principles" in SA?

What is a spiritual foundation?

Are personalities to be ignored?

What is the difference between anonymity and confidentiality?

What is the spirituality underlying this tradition?

Traditions Scenarios

A. There are 3 recent additions to your SA home group. One loves the atmosphere of the meeting but wishes to continue in an active sexual relationship outside marriage. One wants to be sober by the SA definition but keeps on relapsing. One agrees with the SA sobriety definition but interprets the word spouse to include his current partner in a legal same-sex marriage. Which traditions apply in these cases and what action is your group going to take?

B. A buddy, who is in AA, has sent you an invitation to become his friend on Facebook. You notice that his full name and photo appear on his FB profile and that several of his FB friends seem to be AAs, though the rest are probably not. A lot of recovery slogans have been posted on his wall plus a link to an AA convention. You have a couple of close SA friends in your own FB account but mainly family members. Which traditions apply? What should you do?

C. You are the secretary of your home group. You suspect that the newcomer who has just arrived at your meeting is a journalist. Which traditions apply? What should you do?

D. One of your regular home group members has been going around telling outsiders that you are in SA. Which traditions apply? What should you do?

E. A chronic slipper in your home group insists on moaning on and on about his acting out. He seems to have no positive message to share. Which traditions apply? As GSR of the group, what should you do?

F. A sponsee of yours is a member of a certain church, which has created an in-house group to help church members who are lust-addicted. This group has recently begun using the SA meeting format, steps and traditions. Your sponsee has asked you 3 questions:

1. Should our in-house group send its 7th Tradition monies to SAICO or to the nearest intergroup?

2. Could I take a salary from my church to open more of these in-house groups?

3. Could I accept a no-strings stipend* from my church and spend my whole time opening regular SA meetings not involving my church?

[Stipend = a predetermined amount of money that is provided periodically to help offset expenses.] Which traditions apply? What should you say?

G. You are invited to a check meeting called in response to concerns about your behaviour. Role play one of the following and hear what your check meeting has to say:

Member A. You receive a retainer from your church to carry the SA message and to start SA groups in the local community. Your church insists that these SA groups and meetings be unaffiliated with itself.

Member B. You receive a salary from your church to 12th Step lust addicts. Your church leaves it up to you to decide whether to bring newcomers to regular SA groups or to the church's own in-house chastity groups.

Member C. Your church pays you to form in-house lust recovery groups, patterned after but not affiliated with SA.

Member D. You are a psychotherapist, currently offering a generous 25% off your normal rates to any home group members who come to you for s-therapy.

Member E. You use your car a lot for SA service work and are getting into debt. You've decided to start charging enquirers 0.35c per mile to visit them in their homes and tell them about the SA solution.

Member F. You charge a flat rate of \$45 per head to take new members through the steps.

H. Your IG is considering what to do about these three troublesome SA groups.

Group A has engaged in criminal misconduct but seems to have got away with it.

Group B is blatantly affiliated with an outside organization but vehemently denies this.

Group C persistently violates certain SA Traditions, using other Traditions to justify this.

What are the arguments for exclusion? When might our spirituality include or exclude?

J. You have been sent, as GSR, to your intergroup. Your group wishes you to vote on an issue in a way that you believe is contrary to the traditions. How should you vote?