

Review of the Traditions regarding Memorial Contributions by Family Members and Friends of a Deceased Al-Anon Member

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

Considerations:

- This Tradition would be violated if allowing family member memorial contributions would affect the unity of the fellowship and prevent recovery of our members.
- Many members have long-held beliefs that AFG is not allowed to accept family member memorial contributions. A decision to do so could bring disunity to the fellowship.
- A unifying connection between surviving members of the family and AFG could be beneficial to them and to Al-Anon.
- Accepting such contributions could be seen as creating a “loophole” thus leading to an internal controversy that could keep the fellowship from advancement.

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.

Considerations:

- We do not need to fear discussing this issue, our Higher Power is present in the group conscience.
- The early group conscience decisions on this topic allowed memorial contributions from family members to be accepted. Years later, a World Service Conference (WSC) decision on this topic decided that family memorial contributions were against Traditions. A new group conscience could either affirm or reverse that decision.
- We can be assured that asking our Higher Power to express Himself in an informed discussion on this issue will continue to lead us to the best decision at the time it is made.

Tradition Three: The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Considerations:

- Surviving family members may meet the qualifications for membership but it is not for us to assume.
- Al-Anon membership is self-defined.
- Attempting to specify who is a member could cause distress to the family and conflict within the fellowship.

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

Considerations:

- Could accepting family member contributions affect Al-Anon as a whole in any way, including any possible effects on groups, districts, and Areas who follow the lead of the WSO in such matters?
- This Tradition requires us to consider the impact of any new decision on other Al-Anon service structures around the world.
- A.A. doesn't accept such contributions. If Al-Anon were to do so, would it affect the A.A. fellowship?

Tradition Five: Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

Considerations:

- Acceptance of such contributions allows family members to express their gratitude for the help that their loved one has received.
- Al-Anon members don't want the fellowship to be thought of as ungrateful or uncaring.
- If accepting family member contributions helps us bring comfort to the grieving, we may be fulfilling our primary purpose.
- Accepting contributions might build a connection with a family member and could open the door to a prospective member.

- Tradition Five does not say we bring comfort only to those who have come to an Al-Anon meeting or claim to be a member.
- Tradition Five was written at a time when contributions were accepted from family members of deceased members.
- Some members believe that accepting memorial contributions from family members has nothing to do with the group's purpose to provide help to families of alcoholics.
- Members tend to define "group" as a group, district, AIS, LDC, Area, WSO, or GSO. They do not make the distinction that in this Tradition "group" refers to a single Al-Anon Family Group. Allowing non-member memorial contributions at the WSO may cause confusion with what is allowable for an individual group or service arm.

Tradition Six: Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Considerations:

- Providing services requires money to carry out our spiritual aim. Such contributions provide an additional means to provide those services.
- Any monies received are used for our sole purpose—to carry the message to families and friends of alcoholics.
- When we accept a contribution in any amount, we protect ourselves from influence by both limiting the amount and by not allowing earmarking of funds. We guard against allowing anyone to control our decision-making.
- The acceptance of money on behalf of anyone, including a member, must pass a test of safeguards to ensure that this Tradition is not violated.
- WSO does not accumulate monies beyond an ample reserve so that we are not diverted by excessive amounts of money or property.
- Al-Anon groups are encouraged to maintain only a reserve that is prudent for the purpose of supporting the Al-Anon fellowship. Would allowing contributions from family members tip that balance?
- Would accepting such contributions divert Al-Anon in any way from its primary spiritual aim?

Tradition Seven: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Considerations:

- If we accept family member contributions, we could be perceived as not being self-supporting.
- Members tend to define “group” as a group, district, AIS, LDC, Area, WSO, or GSO. They do not make the distinction that in this Tradition “group” refers to a single Al-Anon Family Group. Allowing non-member memorial contributions at the WSO may cause confusion with what is allowable for an individual group or service arm.
- The long version of Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition Seven addresses the groups’ responsibility to be self-supporting. The importance of this practice was to ensure that groups were not influenced by large amounts of money, or being obligated to any outside enterprise.
- Could accepting memorial contributions in small amounts undermine the groups’ support of WSO?
- Prior to 1986, memorial contributions that were accepted had amount restrictions placed on them.
- From the beginning, Al-Anon has never solicited contributions from outside the Al-Anon fellowship.
- WSO occasionally receives unsolicited memorial contributions from family members.

Tradition Eight: Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

No connection.

Tradition Nine: Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

No connection.

Tradition Ten: The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Considerations:

- Currently, when a non-member makes a contribution to AFG, Inc., it is returned, or a call is made to verify whether the contributor is a member. This practice has the potential to elicit a public controversy if such a contact makes the contributor upset enough to express the concern in a public way.
- It might lead to public controversy if an obituary or other public notice appeared to solicit contributions.
- This Tradition refers to public controversy rather than internal controversy.

Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.

Considerations:

- Al-Anon might be seen as attractive to family members if they are allowed to contribute to Al-Anon in memory of their loved one.
- Any reference to contributions to Al-Anon in the media (such as in an obituary) would violate this Tradition.

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Considerations:

- The source of all contributions to the WSO is anonymous to the Al-Anon membership.
- The current WSO practice requires verification by the WSO staff that any contribution is from an Al-Anon member. This practice may be in conflict with our principle of anonymity.
- Would acceptance of memorial contributions from family members compromise our spiritual foundation?