

# Direct Responsibility

## A Member Takes A Close Look at Tradition Nine...

I was recently asked to share with a group of members on the Ninth Tradition. Study of any one of our Traditions has recently made me aware of how intertwined the spiritual principles of our Twelve Traditions are. Achievement of the spiritual goal in each Tradition is dependent upon the spiritual principles in several of the other Traditions.

As I see it, our Ninth Tradition provides the ways and means to achieve the spiritual goals of the First Tradition and our Fifth Tradition. The Ninth Tradition gives us the vehicle which allows our trusted servants

to express and satisfy the will of our Ultimate Authority. Our directly responsible service boards and committees are composed of our leaders; those members in whom we've invested our trust. They do the jobs that we as groups require in order to make our message; recovery from addiction, more generally available. Directly responsible service boards and committees also offer us enhanced personal recovery through the development of N.A. Unity. That all seems quite complex, but in the reality of practice, it's really quite simple. We as a Fellowship utilize our talents as individuals in order to live the Twelfth Step in our personal programs. We band together in

groups in order to carry the message of recovery from addiction more effectively than we can as individuals. In our meetings, we reinforce each other's recovery as well as offering recovery to new people. As individuals and groups of individuals we sponsor the addicts seeking recovery in their attempt to stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. That's what N.A. is all about. We are each, as individuals, responsible in our Twelfth Step to carry the message to the addict

seeking recovery. We gratefully live this responsibility in order to keep the re-

covery we have found in N.A. As groups, this remains our primary purpose so that we may work together for our common welfare and the unity that results in enhanced personal recovery. Each of us has a special way of carrying the message of recovery from addiction. We meet together in groups and work out our differences. We design our meetings so that the message becomes more available. A loving Ultimate Authority is expressed when we work together to do this. We select from among our members the best qualified and most willing, trusting them with the jobs that we need done. They serve us. Although the group is the most primary vehicle of sharing

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**"...so that the message becomes more available."**

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recovery with addicts who seek it, we find that some of the jobs that need done require groups to band together. The Ninth Tradition provides for us a structure within which our autonomous groups may collectively achieve their primary purpose. We're not organized, but we do have structure. Directly responsible to autonomous groups, our service boards and committees are different from each other because each of them serves the needs of a different part of the Fellowship. Our service boards and committees need no autonomy because they are directly responsible to those they serve. Each service board or committee specializes in their activities according to the needs of the groups and members they serve in order to be directly responsible.

Direct responsibility is a two-sided affair. The people we trust to serve us become informed through travel and communication within N.A. They learn the best ways to do the jobs we entrust. They don't act on their own exclusively — direct responsibility demands that they receive at least their general instructions from us; the groups and the members. Therefore, it is their responsibility to inform us of what is required for them to accomplish the job we've trusted them to do. We members and groups need the correct information to make logical decisions. It is equally our responsibility as members of autonomous groups to seek out this information, accept information from those we trust to serve and discuss it so that we might provide the guidance that

our trusted servants need to act. We've often seen groups make decisions based on rumor and misinformation, forcing their directly responsible service boards and committees to take action detrimental to our common welfare. Sometimes these inappropriate actions result in our message becoming less available rather than more available. We have also seen service boards and committees acting in opposition to the wishes of those they serve, or simply failing to seek guidance from those they are designed to serve. This usually results in disunity, confusion and fewer addicts finding recovery.

It seems to me that directly responsible service boards and committees would result in more addicts finding the life saving message of recovery from addiction, more unity, more trust in our servants, and a clearer expression of the will of our Ultimate Authority. We can not allow groups of individuals to perform tasks in the name of Narcotics Anonymous unless they are directly responsible to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We may only create service boards and committees which are directly responsible to us. Clearly stated in the Ninth Tradition; it is our duty to guarantee that any service board or committee or any groups of individuals functioning in the name of N.A. are directly responsible to N.A. and composed of our trusted servants. We the groups and members of N.A. give the directives to our service boards and committees.