

TRADITION NINE

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

At first glance Tradition Nine appears to be in contradiction with itself. On the one hand, it says MA ought never be organized. On the other hand, it says we can create service boards or committees. MA is not like other organizations because we have no rules or regulations, no fees or dues. We do, however, have spiritual principles suggested in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

We do not enforce these traditions as if they were rules. We do not expel or banish members for nonconformity. We do not order newcomers to do anything. The advice of a more experienced member to a newcomer is a suggestion, not a command. Addicts must not be dictated to, either individually or collectively. The Twelve Traditions are suggestions for behavior of the group, just as the Twelve Steps are suggestions for recovery of the individual.

However, we have learned that unless each member follows to the best of their ability the spiritual principles expressed in our Twelve Steps of recovery, their progress can be difficult. This difficulty is not a penalty inflicted by people of authority in MA, but the result of personal disobedience to spiritual principles.

This concept also applies to our groups. Our groups follow spiritual principles so that we may be guided by a loving God whose expression may come through in our group conscience. We do not have any governing authority,

but we do have informal rotating service committees. These committees serve the fellowship but do not govern. They are very limited in their authority and often selflessly handle the group's chores. They make the arrangements by which the group functions. These committees do not give spiritual advice, do not judge conduct, and do not issue orders. The committee members can be voted out at the next election. They are servants, not governors.

There is a big difference between vested authority and the spirit of service we find on our service committees at the district and world service level. In fact, the Articles of Incorporation for World Services, Inc. states that the purpose of World Services is to serve the society of MA, not to govern. The trustees are merely caretakers of World Services.

Tradition Nine defines true fellowship: a group without organization, guided by a loving God, and driven only by the spirit of service.