

ASK IT BASKET QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Spring Assembly 2015

1. What is the policy of “gifting” a soft cover “How Al-Anon Works” book? Is this a “gift” from the group? How is a decision made on who or when to give this “gift”?

Answer; Page 41 of the Service Manual – Welcoming New Members gives suggestions to “provide the newcomers with Conference Approved Literature (possibly a Newcomer Packet)”.

Tradition 4 states – Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

It would be helpful for your group to have a group conscience to decide if and what literature you want to give to the newcomer. It is group autonomy how each group decides to deal with giving literature to newcomers.

When I was Delegate in 2011, the WSO introduced the soft cover “How Al-Anon Works” book, which is cheaper than the hard cover book. The idea is that groups or individuals may give the book to the Newcomer as a way of “paying it forward”.

2. As Tradition Eleven states: “Guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members”. Are we not breaking anonymity by not letting dual members hold a service position which is above the group level?

Answer; Revision of text passed at World Service Conference p. 82-83 in the Service Manual. Al-Anon Family Groups, a program dedicated to helping the friends and families of alcoholics. Over the years, Al-Anon developed its own service structure, based on the model provided by A.A.’s experience and guided by the Twelve Traditions.

Tradition Five defines Al-Anon’s single purpose. Tradition Six encourages cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliate or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and A.A. This separation helps avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and safeguards Al-Anon’s singleness of purpose. Accordingly, Al-Anon’s policy is that members who are also members of A.A. do not serve as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Delegate, World Service Conference member, alternate to any of these service positions, or on any committee of the World Service

Filling service positions is a matter of district and Area autonomy, within this policy and the spiritual principles that form its basis. Tradition Four grants autonomy to local service arms, except in matters affecting Al-Anon or AA as a whole. Al-Anon members who are also members of AA participate fully in all group activities, including group conscience decisions. However, they do not hold Al-Anon service positions that vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

Members of Al-Anon who are also members of AA are often in a position to carry our message to those who are not aware of the benefits of attending Al-Anon Family Groups. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of AA may serve Al-Anon in ways that include being an Alateen Group Sponsor or they may be invited by local/Area service arms, the Board of Trustees, or the World Service Office to participate in projects, in keeping with the spirit of this policy.

3. (a) Can you hand out an AA schedule if someone comes to Al-Anon that is a user, after an Al-Anon meeting?

Answer; This is an outside issue but as long as it is done **after** the meeting, it is acceptable.

(b) Round-up baskets. Where does the money go? Back to the group or stay with the round-up? I say stay with the round-up. Tradition 7.

Answer; This is also an outside issue. Should be decided by the Round-up Committee. Usually both AA and Al-Anon participation.

(c) The motto some people say at the end of the meeting after the closing prayer, is it Al-Anon approved?

Answer; Pg 22 of the Service Manual states: It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the Al-Anon Declaration after their closing.

If you are referring to the “chant” that some people say after the prayer or declaration, this is not Al-Anon approved.

4. We understand that “News & Views” is for personal use/reading and not to be used at meetings. If so, why is it promoted at Area Assembly and groups expected to purchase subscriptions.

Answer; It is not an expectation. However it is encouraged at the Area level because it is an income source for the Area, put on by the Area Newsletter for the use of the Area members to further their personal growth.

5. Are the bids for hosting assembly by a 50% majority or a 2/3 majority like elections?

Answer; Practice has been by majority. The 2/3 majority has only been used for elections. The secretary reviewed prior motions and found past bids had been only by majority. It was agreed that this question will be referred to Committee for review.

My review this morning was that in the Service Manual, pg 20, General Warranties of Conference, point 3, “that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by unanimity”.

The dictionary defines unanimity,” a consensus or undecided opinion”. Therefore bids would be by majority.

6. Is it wrong to mention that literature is available at the public library? Sometimes a person cannot afford to buy literature.

Answer; It is not wrong to mention that Al-Anon literature may be available at a Public Library. Groups and Districts are encouraged to place literature at their local libraries as a form of public outreach.

7. Can an Al-Anon member and a member of AA as well be a group contact at WSO?

Answer; Yes they can. Being a group contact cannot lead to positions at the Area level.

8. District Fundraiser- is there an issue creating a basket/raffle of Non CAL literature as a fundraiser? We understand that we can't sell tickets to anyone who is not an Al-Anon member.

Answer; Pg 97 of the Service Manual. Avoiding Commercialism

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy. (See “Selling Products/ Chances”) But to avoid commercialism in the Fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to the Forum, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. (Also see “Raffle/Lottery Tickets”)

9. Are we allowed as a group to donate old copies of the Forum to libraries or doctor's offices as our Public Outreach?

Answer; The Forum- April 2014- pg 13 "The Forum and Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism".

Members and groups are encouraged to share The Forum with one another and share Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism with the community.

10. Some members of our group were concerned when a newcomer took notes during our group meeting. Is it acceptable behaviour to take notes at a meeting?

Answer; Yes, it's OK for someone to take notes for memory assistance. However, as this was a newcomer, it would be a good idea to take this person aside and explain about Anonymity and then reassure the group that this person isn't going to break the Anonymity of others.