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# EDITORIAL:

## On the Value of Tradition

Mutual experience is the common ground on which A.A.s meet individually and upon which A.A. has been built collectively.

As written in the pamphlet, "Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition; Twelve Points to Assure Our Future," A.A. was not invented by anyone—it grew. "Trial and error has produced a rich experience. Little by little we have been adopting the lessons of that experience first as policy and then as tradition. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much, the letter might crush the spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. ..."

But, as the pamphlet says further, "the lessons of our experience count for a great deal—a very great deal. ..."

What each of us has experienced individually counts for a great deal in helping to show another how to gain sobriety in A.A., and in developing even beyond the level of sobriety into a new and fuller way of life.

Likewise, the experience of each group may be invaluable to other groups, new and old.

Sharing experience for mutual good is an A.A. principle and practice.

The "Twelve Points of Tradition" cover all of the most vital experiences encountered in A.A. For instance, why is anonymity so important; what are its spiritual values? Why should A.A. as a whole, and each group individually, have but one primary purpose? What has been learned through actual experience about the problems of money, property and authority? What does experience say on the question of professionalism?

These are some of the topics incorporated in the Twelve Points. They are indeed vital to A.A. now and to the future of A.A.

For this reason, the Grapevine editorials, beginning with the next issue, will take up each one of the "Twelve Points of Tradition" in succession in the same manner that "The 12 Steps" have been covered successively in the past. And, as was done with the Steps, different writers will give their views on and interpretations of the Points of Tradition, so as to gain a cross-section treatment.

Again this will be a sharing of experience—the practice and the principle by which A.A. grows, and A.A.s grow.