

## COMMENTARIES ON THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF SCA

### Tradition 12:

**“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”**

Tradition Twelve is the “spiritual foundation of all our traditions” perhaps because, like other spiritual principles, it takes practice to uphold. Moreover, what we have come to practice in recovery is humility. This is humility in the sense of seeing ourselves as we truly are. We are able to do this because we have, by means of the Twelve Steps, worked in partnership with a Higher Power to uncover a self that is distinct from our character defects. Once we have worked the Steps, we are able to view others and ourselves with proper perspective, and compassion. We become “right-sized,” recognizing unhealthy ego for the spiritual trap it is.

What we want to try to avoid is acting out on our character defects in meetings and in relation to the Fellowship. Frequently, this acting out is caused by deep-seated shame that leads to either perfectionism or grandiosity or, alternatively, to overdependence on others. Many of us also have a ferocious appetite for attention, or a powerful drive for recognition or status. All of these character defects can produce conflict within the groups. None of us is totally free from our defects, so the potential for conflict is always present. This Tradition is a gentle reminder of this fact, and a suggestion that we become aware of the principles behind the Traditions so that we act counter to our defects as they may manifest themselves in the group. We want to avoid letting our personalities get in the way of the principles of recovery that we and others need for our survival.

In a spiritual sense, anonymity means that the whole of the Program is even greater than the sum of its parts. This is significant for us in SCA because it guarantees the survival of the groups, and the Fellowship as an entity. We are reminded that no one individual, and no one group, is more important than SCA as a whole.

Anonymity means we generally do not identify ourselves as members of SCA by name publicly to people outside of the Fellowship. This certainly needs to be categorical at the level of mass media, but most often members will keep their anonymity in public in general. Within the Fellowship, there is no need to maintain personal anonymity, but if a member wishes to do so, we respect their choice. If we encounter public figures at meetings, we are especially careful to preserve their anonymity.

In doing service for a group or service board, individual members necessarily deal with the everyday world, and will sometimes likely need to disclose their identity and provide their full names on behalf of the group. We may have to disclose our

membership in SCA in situations such as when making arrangements to rent space to hold a meeting, dealing with financial institutions, or doing specific outreach work to carry the SCA message. This is in keeping with Traditions Eleven and Twelve: maintaining anonymity here is a question of personal comfort for the individual member.

The same applies to certification of attendance at SCA meetings for court-ordered attendees. It is a group conscience decision for a particular group whether or not to accommodate such requests from members, and each group and individual member is free to decide whether or not to sign certificates of attendance, thereby disclosing their identity.

Regardless of what we choose to do with our own anonymity, we do not identify who we see in meetings, or those we know to attend SCA meetings, to people outside of the Fellowship. This keeps the program safe for members and prospective members to attend.

Anonymity also protects us from gossip and criticism. Mutual respect is fundamental to our shared recovery. The SCA Closing Statement reminds us that what is said by individuals at a particular meeting should be treated as confidential. This maintains the integrity and safety of intimate self-disclosure.

Anonymity is the mechanism which maximizes our focus and minimizes issues of "money, property or prestige" and anything else which would endanger "our primary purpose." Sometimes we are selective about who and what we listen to, and tend to judge the rest. However, following the Twelfth Tradition as the very foundation of our Fellowship's existence ensures the continuation of that existence. The benefit reaped from this is a deepening sense of humility, inevitable when we truly view each other as equal in recovery.

Speakers at SCA meetings sometimes ask the group to listen to the message rather than focus on the messenger. Others ask that the group identify with the feelings rather than the facts, or that they "take what they need and leave the rest." These examples of anonymity help to foster an atmosphere of openness, mutual support and community. Members can both share freely and identify with what is shared.

Indeed, anonymity is a powerful vehicle of transformation that allows the members of a group to experience healing through a collective consciousness. Some of us have harbored intense rage, fear and sadness in our compulsion, and the opportunity finally to express and release these feelings in a meeting is the relief of a lifetime. Through the anonymity offered at meetings, we find a refuge where we are neither judged nor shamed.

"Principles before personalities" allows members to strongly disagree at a business meeting, and support each other in recovery afterward. When the principles of the Program are valued above all else, SCA thrives. This preserves "our common

welfare” and helps the Fellowship to grow. This brings us around full circle to our First Tradition: “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SCA unity.”

(Extract from “The Twelve Traditions of Sexual Compulsives Anonymous” © SCA-ISO)