

COMMENTARIES ON THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF SCA

Tradition 4:

“Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or SCA as a whole.”

An SCA group is any group that meets regularly, at a specified place and time, for the purpose of recovery from sexual compulsion, provided that it adopts the Twelve Steps and follows the Twelve Traditions of Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. Any two or more groups can form an SCA intergroup. An SCA intergroup can so designate itself provided that it agrees to adopt the Twelve Steps and follow the Twelve Traditions of Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. Likewise, the International Service Organization of SCA is organized solely to further the recovery of those who suffer from sexual compulsion, and endorses SCA's Twelve Step recovery program, adheres to its Twelve Traditions, and aims only to serve as the Trusted Servant of the SCA Fellowship. These fundamental qualifications provide the framework for the abundantly varied approach to recovery from sexual compulsion that is found within the SCA Fellowship, where groups have complete autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups, or SCA as a whole.

There is a principle of freedom at work in this Tradition, but one that is balanced against group willfulness. Autonomy means that each group is self-governing. Each group follows the Twelve Traditions, but has latitude to adapt them to its particular circumstances. The positive aspect of this Tradition is that a variety of group formats may be used in SCA, and different literature read at various meetings, all determined by group conscience. Some people may find some group formats or approaches appealing, but not others. This freedom and variety may allow SCA to reach a larger number of still-suffering sexual compulsives than it otherwise would.

In addition to its own situation, a group ought also to consider how its actions could affect other groups, or SCA as a whole. For instance, one group's bad relationship with a landlord may negatively affect the chances that other SCA groups could secure a meeting place at that location. Likewise, it is best that SCA groups maintain friendly relations with one another. One of the best ways to do this is for groups to form an intergroup to work together on projects, and for that intergroup to join SCA's International Service Organization to work together on matters affecting the Fellowship as a whole.

In a fearful attempt to guard our own recovery, as members of one group, we might have wanted to try to control the other groups in our area so that they and their meetings were run in a certain way. Such action is not in keeping with the principles of the Fourth Tradition, or in the spirit of individual responsibility fostered by recovery. What the Fourth Tradition tells us is that the only way for our fellowship to remain vital, secure and effective is if we trust each group to take care

of itself. Unless what is happening at one group is directly affecting another group, or the Fellowship as a whole, we must stand back and let the members of that group determine what works for them, and let them respond to whatever problems arise. These are the real lessons of this Tradition: letting go of control, getting out of the way of the recovery of other addicts, and trusting in the process of the Program and its spiritual principles.

Just like individuals, groups and service bodies are also allowed to change their minds. They do this by taking another group conscience. If a different conclusion is reached, they can then take a different course of action than was previously decided. Over time, as individual members, we feel less need to control the business of a group or service body. This is because we learn that if a particular group conscience does not work out favorably, a group or service body can always change direction. In this way, we learn to trust that everyone is learning and growing spiritually from the unfolding of events.

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