

COMMENTARIES ON THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF SCA

Tradition 7:

“Every SCA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

The Seventh Tradition is about responsibility. Specifically, it is about financial responsibility. Part of addiction is an unwillingness to accept responsibility for one’s actions, to accept that there is a cause and effect relationship between acting out sexually and a multitude of negative consequences. It is as if—as active addicts—we wanted to live in a fantasy world: one in which the principle of reality has no effect. Recovery, by contrast, requires us as individuals, and as members of the group, to engage with reality. As part of taking responsibility for ourselves and our lives, Tradition Seven asks us, as individuals and as groups, to explore how we support ourselves, including our relationship to money. Moreover, it asks us to take responsibility for our financial independence. This involves the practical need to pay the rent, and other expenses for the group. Here we realize that the spirituality talked about in the Program is not a fantasy world in which we merely wish for a desired outcome, but that it actually involves planning, determined action and monetary support on our part.

At any SCA meeting in the world, including those hosted by electronic means, at some point in the meeting there will be an announcement or indication that we have a Seventh Tradition, as a call for contributions from members. When the basket, or hat, or envelope, or bag, or collection box comes around, or a contribution link or notice is displayed, members can contribute towards the group’s expenses. These can include not only group rent and refreshments, but also literature expenses, the funding of telephone lines, websites, social and recovery events, and paying contributions on to service bodies. Many group and service body websites will also have online contribution features. As members, the cost of our compulsion has often been great, including in monetary terms, and the financial cost of our Twelve Step recovery by comparison is minimal.

Tradition Seven also involves supporting SCA’s service bodies, which perform the work of the Fellowship beyond the levels of the individual and the group. When an SCA service body such as a local intergroup, a convention committee, or ISO needs funding, or contributions to them are being considered, it is important to note that they are not self-supporting groups within themselves. They are service bodies consisting of trusted servants, funded by and directly accountable to those they serve. Service bodies may accept direct contributions from SCA members, but will ideally establish an annual cap on individual donations and a maximum amount for one-time bequests in wills, so as to encourage broad support and avoid undue influence.

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous has a history of groups, intergroups, or ISO supporting newly- formed meetings. This is a way of carrying the message. Such meetings must, if they are to be healthy, duly progress to supporting themselves. Self-support, at a minimum, means paying rent and covering other group expenses out of group funds.

Part of being self-supporting includes being good stewards of the funds in our possession; therefore care ought to be taken when electing a Treasurer, or serving as Treasurer of a group, meeting, or service body. Our servants are trusted, but it is prudent for SCA groups at all levels to establish simple checks and balances to ensure program funds and property are well-maintained and accounted for.

The simplest interpretation of this Tradition is that groups cannot rely on any entity or individuals outside of SCA for monetary support. Contributions from outside the SCA Fellowship—of any size, but especially large ones—could entangle Sexual Compulsives Anonymous with other organizations that ask something in return for their money. By following this Tradition and being self-funding, as in all matters, SCA stays with its primary purpose – it does not have to be distracted by serving the goals of other organizations, or being subject to their influence.

Tradition Seven points us to the idea that “self-supporting” can also be taken to refer to our service needs, and the responsibility of filling service positions. SCA depends on service by individuals at all levels – personal, meeting, group, intergroup and ISO. If SCA is to thrive, members must of necessity step up to provide this support. Beyond service positions, support can be given to the group in other ways, for example, even by setting up chairs before a meeting. Attending meetings, honest sharing, and assisting other members in their recovery are also important forms of individual support for the group.

Regardless of these considerations, membership in SCA never depends on the amount of money a member can give to the group. If members are not in a position to make a financial contribution, it is important for them and others to remember that their presence at meetings is what matters. There are no dues or fees for membership; the only requirement for SCA membership is a desire to stop having compulsive sex.

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