

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - - - SATURDAY APRIL 4, 1998 - - - GREP P.

The primary purpose of our Groups is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers and our service structure is a tool we utilize to aid us in that effort.

We create service boards and committees to serve our needs and they are directly responsible to us.

The structure is designed to do things that affect our Groups or NA as a whole and it, therefore, cannot function autonomously.

There shouldn't be a whole lot of controversy about these three concepts, they are based in our Traditions and have been recognized as important since we published our first set of By-Laws in 1953. I guess there are some who feel that the Traditions are passé or no longer relevant to our needs, but most still feel that they are part of the set of principles that is our program. The difficulty seems to come when we try to apply the Traditions.

It seems that the broader the scope of a service board or committee:

- a. The more difficult it is to communicate effectively,
- b. The harder it becomes to remain directly responsible to those we serve,
- c. The more important the (perceived) need for organization, efficiency, specialization, and control becomes,
- d. The more critical money and profit seem to become,
- e. The more attractive autonomy without limitation seems, and,
- f. The greater the concern is about potential impact of our actions (positive or negative).

This may, in part, explain the motivation behind recent developments in our service structure such as our 12 Concepts, A Guide to Local Service, or the motions in our current C.A.R. It may also help to explain some contempt of our Traditions. (**Note:** these actions do not appear to be limited to any particular philosophical group, geographic location, or function within the service structure).

Sometimes it seems to me that rather than making spiritual progress, we're getting further and further away from spiritual principles in our service efforts. This direction continues to concern me and I would like to suggest a couple of possible motions for your consideration:

1. That, at all levels of service, no service board or committee should initiate or pursue any course of action that has not been specifically assigned to them by the fellowship they serve.
2. That, at all levels of service, our service boards and committees should present reports and alternatives, rather making directive motions which set or change policy.

The intent of these motions is to help strengthen the principles of direct responsibility and limited autonomy in our service structure.