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July 5, 2012

## SIMPLE AND ELEGANT

Service in NA is not mystical or complicated.

One addict helping another, you and I reaching out a hand to someone who wants to stop using, lose the desire to use and find a new way of life. Sharing with them how it happened for us, how we did it: how we abstained, what we learned, the actions we took, the feelings we felt. Giving them the confidence that if we could do it they can too, just for today. That is basic service, the most important service there is. The proper goal of structural service is to support us in our basic service and make it easier for us.

Three primary Spiritual Principles and a couple of secondary considerations guide us in all our structural service efforts. True service is simple and elegant. The Second Tradition tells us where policy decisions are made where service direction comes from and how we should behave if we have been given responsibility. The Seventh tradition tells us where the staffing, creativity and funding come from. And the Ninth Tradition defines the structure and its primary, pivotal role. If we understand and follow these basic parameters, if we embrace and honor these Spiritual Principles there is neither confusion nor any difficulty with structural service. Structural service according to these parameters supports our basic service. Whenever we step outside these parameters, whenever we compromise these Spiritual Principles our basic service becomes more difficult. The secondary considerations are in the fourth and tenth traditions. The fourth frees us to provide most of the local services we need at the group level. And the tenth helps keep us pure and focused so we can genuinely support basic personal service.

The simplicity and elegance of service to NA is easy to understand when we see the Spiritual Principles inherent in our Traditions clearly. NA is composed of members and Groups of members. All the service boards and committees that our Groups and members create are for NA not of NA. NA is only members and groups, the structural services we create are not a part of NA, they exist only to be Directly

Responsible to the Groups and members who created them. This can be difficult for some to understand, but clarity of perception of the ninth tradition makes it simple: "NA as such, ought never to be organized..." means nothing exists to control or govern the members and Groups of NA. "Organized" means ideas, rules and concepts imposed upon us by some corporate-like structure or government. However, "...we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

When we members and Groups see the need for a service we can form a board or committee to fill that need. We are NA, the board or committee is not. Perhaps the need is just for a short term and the board or committee is disbanded as soon as the job is done. Perhaps the need is ongoing so the board or committee continues indefinitely. In either case the board or committee is not NA, we are, the board or committee just exists because we created it to perform a specific function. The specific function we create our boards and committees to do are the basic element of their Direct Responsibility. We design, prescribe and control their function. We tell all of them what to do...not the other way around. The Spiritual principle here is the sanctity of the NA group and member and the subordination of service boards and committees.

All decisions about the policy and the role of service boards and committees comes from the NA groups and members they are Directly Responsible to, because "...there is but one Ultimate Authority, a loving God as he may express himself in our Group Conscience..." service boards and committees only decide how they will do what they are directed to do. That is why we elect or appoint people who know how to behave: "...our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." Servants are a distant idea to modern times but consider how a proper servant would behave. Perhaps visualize a fine waiter or waitress in a fancy restaurant. The Spiritual Principle here is surrender to the Power that effects change in our lives and supports recovery; humility and respect.

Anonymity, the Spiritual Foundation of NA and the second half of our name influences us to treat each other as equals. If we are "...completely self supporting..." we put no restrictions on member participation in the service projects our service boards or committees undertake. To do so would be to limit the voice of our higher power by selecting who is qualified to help and who is not. Certain specific tasks require certain experience or abilities but the general work needing done can be best accomplished by open volunteerism. If we limit the open participation of our members we open the door to hire unnecessary outsiders which is prohibited by "...declining outside contributions." The Seventh tradition also speaks of funding; money is required to do many jobs and when the Spiritual purpose is right in NA the money is always there. The Spiritual Principle here is that if it really needs done according to Group Conscience, if those doing it are Directly Responsible, NA Groups and members with Spiritual help will get it done!

Simple and elegant, not complex and difficult to understand; this is true NA Service.

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