

Tradition Ten

September 1948

To most of us, Alcoholics Anonymous has become as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. We like to believe that it will soon be as well known and just as enduring as that historic landmark. We enjoy this pleasant conviction because nothing has yet occurred to disturb it; we reason that we must hang together or die. Hence we take for granted our continued unity as a movement.

But should we? Though God has bestowed upon us great favors, and though we are bound by stronger ties of love and necessity than most societies, is it prudent to suppose that automatically these great gifts and attributes shall be ours forever? If we are worthy, we shall probably continue to enjoy them. So the real question is, how shall we always be worthy of our present blessings?

Seen from this point of view, our AA Traditions are those attitudes and practices by which we may deserve, as a movement, a long life and a useful one. To this end, none could be more vital than our Tenth Tradition, for it deals with the subject of controversy — serious controversy.

On the other side of the world, millions have died even recently in religious dissension. Other millions have died in political controversy. The end is not yet. Nearly everybody in the world has turned reformer. Each group, society, and nation is saying to the other, "You must do as we say, or else." Political controversy and reform by compulsion have reached an all-time high. And eternal, seemingly, are the flames of religious dissension.

Being like other men and women, how can we expect to remain forever immune from these perils? Probably we shall not. At length, we must meet them all. We cannot flee from them, nor ought we try. If these challenges do come, we shall, I am sure, go out to meet them gladly and unafraid. That will be the acid test of our worth.

Our best defense? This surely lies in the formation of a Tradition respecting serious controversy so powerful that neither the weakness of persons nor the strain and strife of our troubled times can harm Alcoholics Anonymous. We know that AA must continue to live, or else many of us and many of our fellow alcoholics throughout the world will surely resume the hopeless journey to oblivion. That must never be.

As though by some deep and compelling instinct, we have thus far avoided serious controversies. Save minor and healthy growing pains, we are at peace among ourselves. And because we have thus far adhered to our sole aim, the

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whole world regards us favorably.

May God grant us the wisdom and fortitude ever to sustain an unbreakable unity.