

In 1938 when the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were first introduced, it was already obvious that they were a set of principles, which if taken to heart and acted upon, could literally transform a person's life. Nearly 100 previously hopeless alcoholics had been saved from the brink of insanity and death by practicing these principles. That fellowship was to continue to grow until today there are well over a million recovering alcoholics, sober and restored to normal living because of the twelve step program.

From 1938 to 1946, the fellowship of AA struggled along on the organizational level. While *individuals* were recovering in exponential numbers, the organization was staggering and teetering. The *group* needed some firm guidelines for its "life" as a fellowship of people who wanted as little "organization" as possible and a loving God as their only authority. How do you "organize" that much personal freedom? The twelve traditions are the result of their efforts.

The twelve steps are the principles that assure personal, individual recovery. The twelve traditions are the principles that assure the success of a group. Just as it is essential to practice the steps on a personal level, it is equally essential to practice the traditions in any group that meets to support one another in living the steps. As individuals, we also need the principles embodied in the traditions to help us in our interactions with others.

With the formation of *Heart t' Heart*, the original twelve traditions were prayerfully reviewed and rephrased to reflect LDS concepts. We highly recommend that each person participating in a *Heart t' Heart* group, particularly as any kind of "leader," be very familiar with both the original traditions and the *Heart t' Heart* version. Our groups will not have the positive helpful effect they are meant to have if these concepts are ignored.

The Original Twelve Traditions from Alcoholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction, rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and film.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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The Twelve Traditions of



 Heart t' Heart
An LDS 12-Step Recovery Resource

The Twelve Traditions of Heart t' Heart

1. In *Heart t' Heart*, individual recovery depends on the loving, supportive fellowship of the group. Without acceptance and unity there can be no fellowship and thus no recovery.
2. In *Heart t' Heart* there is only one ultimate authority—a loving God who manifests His will for each group in our prayerful group conscience. Our *Heart t' Heart* leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for *Heart t' Heart* membership is a desire to stop participating in compulsive addictive behaviors.
4. Each *Heart t' Heart* group is autonomous within the guidelines of the steps and the traditions, encouraged only to practice these principles in all its decisions.
5. Each *Heart t' Heart* group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message of recovery from compulsive addictive behavior through the Atonement of Jesus Christ to those who still suffer.
6. A *Heart t' Heart* group ought never endorse, finance or lend the *Heart t' Heart* name to any outside publication or enterprise, lest problems of copyrights, money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every *Heart t' Heart* group ought to be fully self-supporting through voluntary donations from members only.
8. *Heart t' Heart* should remain forever non-professional, but our world service center may employ special workers.
9. *Heart t' Heart*, as such, ought never be organized. We may, however, create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. *Heart t' Heart* has no official opinion on any outside issue. Neither is its intent to promote any doctrine or policy contrary to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Hence, the *Heart t' Heart* name ought never be drawn into any controversy, the opinions expressed being simply those of the individuals who share them.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction, rather than promotion. We need always maintain the spiritual foundation of personal anonymity, acknowledging that all recovery comes through dedication to the principles of the program.
12. Personal anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions—ever reminding us that this program is focused on principles and not personalities.

Highlights

Traditional Guidelines for Individual Participation in Twelve Step Meetings

Here are some basic suggestions that will help assure the success of our meetings. These suggestions will be helpful to newcomers as well as more experienced twelve step members.

ANONYMITY is absolutely vital to the survival of a group. This concept should constantly remind us that we are not in these meetings to learn “juicy” facts about others. There must be absolutely no gossip in this fellowship. We come together to help bear one another’s burdens, not to increase them with judgement or backbiting.

Often in sharing we feel a need to express the hurts and fears we keep inside, to free ourselves from the blame and shame that are often carryovers from the past. Anonymity gives us the freedom to do that.

CROSS TALK/SIDE TALK is discouraged in *Heart t' Heart* meetings. This means we neither interrupt nor engage in dialogue with another speaker. Twelve step meetings are not designed to be encounter groups or advice giving sessions of any sort. Commenting or giving advice discourages the individual’s own ability to hear the Truth as spoken to their hearts directly by the spirit. (2 Nephi 32:3)

SEVENTH TRADITION COLLECTIONS are the sole support of *Heart t' Heart* groups. Traditionally a cup or basket is passed at every meeting, inviting but not requiring donations.

PRAYER IN MEETINGS has been a tradition since the beginning of AA. Twelve step meetings generally use set memorized prayers, such as the Serenity Prayer. These prayers were chosen because of their acceptability to the general public. In *Heart t' Heart* we are free to open and close our meetings in the manner we are familiar with—personal, spontaneous prayer guided by the Spirit.