

TRUSTED SERVANT

How fortunate we are to have the Twelve Traditions of AA to help us set the tone for how we should conduct ourselves with respect to the core values that were hammered out by the founders of A.A. They were careful not to make rules and laws that were designed to take away the individual groups choices on how they want to format their meeting. I, myself have been to meetings where the format was four pages long and I wondered if the folks that make the decisions about those things had ever read the traditions. It seemed to me that almost every new secretary wanted to put their own brand on it, often times without running it by the group for approval.

I've also been to meetings where someone was railroaded into becoming the secretary and really didn't want the job but was pressured into taking it anyway and, as a result, the meeting suffered from neglect and sometimes folded up. Sometimes it's just a matter of inexperience and a lack of stewardship, but it happens just the same and it will continue to happen for as long as we continue to welcome new members into the program. So, what role can I play that would bring the most positive result to these types of situations?

In tradition two in the twelve and twelve, it describes the two extremes of involvement and the two options we have to choose from as, *bleeding deacons* and *elder statesmen*. It does not demand that we select one or the other. It seems to imply that we can choose, for ourselves, which path we want to take. The traditions are laced through and through with patience and tolerance and we will embrace the spirit of understanding when faced with them.

I believe that the term "Trusted Servant" means more than just taking on a coffee commitment or the job as secretary of a meeting, although they are good beginnings. I believe that if I am going to talk someone into taking one of those jobs, that I should also be willing to promise to be their "back-up" if he/she decides to step away from the position later on, or if they plan to be away for a spell, that I will fill in for the time their gone. They are not going to be alone in this.

In meetings where things seem to be getting bogged down by the ponderous additions to the format I might pull together several of the elder statesmen of the group and discuss the idea of revisiting those things that are distractions and contrary to the spirit of the traditions even if it means ruffling some feathers. It's always done with due respect when someone's Ego gets punctured.

These are just a few of the ways I can use to illustrate the approach, as I understand it, not to take sides in these, or any other, situations that allow individuals, rather than the group conscience to set the agenda. I believe that a **trusted servant** is a servant to *Alcoholics Anonymous* as well as *the individuals* in the program. I must be strong enough to do these things even when I know that some members are going to disapprove. I may *influence the decision*, but, in the long run, *I just get one vote*, and when the ballots are counted, *I must be mature enough to respect the group's decision*. Or, I can just bleed all over myself, grab a Big Book, and a pound of coffee and run down the street and start my own meeting. (only kidding)