

CONCEPT XII AND THE SIX WARRANTIES

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CONCEPT XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

CONCEPT XII – AN OVERVIEW

Concept XII consists of the General Warranties of the General Service Conference.

It -- the set of Warranties -- are *cast in stone*; that is, although Bill W. left the door open for alterations and changes in the other Concepts and points out that the rest of the Conference Charter “can be readily amended,” these six General Warranties — like the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions — be changed only by “*written consent of three quarters of all directory-listed A.A. groups who would actually vote on any such proposals, and the considerable time of six months is allowed for careful deliberations.*”

CONCEPT XII – AN OVERVIEW ...

Clearly, Bill writes that “these Warranties indicate the *qualities* of prudence and spirituality which the Conference should always possessThese are the permanent bonds that hold the Conference fast to the movement it serves.”

CONCEPT XII – AN
OVERVIEW ...

It is the Warranties, therefore, that *express spiritual principles* which apply to all other A.A. entities as well.



WARRANTY
ONE

“The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power.”

The *Seventh Tradition* protects us against the accumulation of too much money. So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual member's donations, "we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense." And if we live by *Tradition Two* — that "our ultimate authority is a loving God" and that "our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern" — then we are safe from perilous power.



WARRANTY
ONE



WARRANTY
TWO

“Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.”

Although many of us as active alcoholics were free spenders, when it comes to supporting “A.A. service overhead, we are apt to turn a bit reluctant.”

Yet, in A.A. the cost of the service office is relatively low in terms of the number of groups served, and if the need for support is made clear, the contributions are forthcoming. *The Reserve Fund should be one full year’s operating expenses of the G.S.O. and Grapevine.* The Reserve Fund comes almost entirely from income from the sale of A.A. literature, which also is used to make up the deficit between group contributions and the cost of group services.



WARRANTY
TWO

The Reserve Fund should be one full year's operating expenses of the G.S.O. and Grapevine.

The Reserve Fund comes almost entirely from income from the sale of A.A. literature, which also is used to make up the deficit between group contributions and the cost of group services.



WARRANTY
TWO



WARRANTY
THREE

“None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others.”

This principle is discussed earlier in Concept IV, but “it is so important, we have made it the subject of this Warranty” — a “strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure.”



WARRANTY
THREE



WARRANTY
FOUR

“That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity.”

Bill W. writes that Warranty Four is, on the one hand, “*a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority*”; and, on the other hand, it takes notice of *the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities*, however small.”



WARRANTY
FOUR

Therefore, continues Bill, “this principle guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be *extensively debated*, and that such debates will continue until a *really heavy majority* can support every critical decision.”



WARRANTY
FOUR



WARRANTY
FIVE

“That no Conference action shall ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.”

Although practically all other societies and governments find it necessary to punish individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws, Alcoholics Anonymous finds this practice unnecessary.



WARRANTY
FIVE

Consider Bill's thoughts:

When we fail to follow *sound spiritual principles*, alcohol cuts us down. No humanly administered system of penalties is needed.

This *unique condition is an enormous advantage* to us all, one on which we can fully rely and one which we *should never abandon by resorting to personal attack and punishment*.

Of all societies, ours can *least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts* which would result were we ever to yield to the *temptation to punish in anger*.



WARRANTY
FIVE

For much the same reason, we can not and we *should not enter into public controversy, even in self defense.*

Our experience has shown that, providentially, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation.

Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the worldwide goodwill which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.



WARRANTY
FIVE

Some situations which may require Conference consideration are:

A.A. may come under “sharp public attack or heavy ridicule” — perhaps “with little or no justification in fact. Our best defense in these situations would be no defense whatever — namely, complete silence at the public level.”



WARRANTY
FIVE

“Aggressive or punitive action, even in this area, must be omitted.

Privately, we can inform Tradition-violators that they are out of order.

When they persist, we can use such other resources of persuasion as we have. In the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly on the pressures of A.A. opinion and public opinion.”



WARRANTY
FIVE

“Another kind of problem is the severe internal disagreement that comes to unwelcome public attention.”

As G.S.O. “is not a police operation,” we can only offer A.A.’s experience as a matter of information. If the criticism of A.A. is partly or wholly justified, it may be well to acknowledge this privately to the critics — with our thanks.”



WARRANTY
FIVE



WARRANTY
SIX

“That though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.”

The A.A. Traditions accord the individual member and the A.A. group extraordinary liberties.

In fact, we A.A.s *probably enjoy more and greater freedoms* than any Fellowship in the world.

We claim this as no virtue. We know we *have to choose conformity to A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or else face dissolution and death.*



WARRANTY
SIX

Because we set such a high value on our great liberties and cannot conceive that they will need to be limited, we here specially *enjoin our General Service Conference to abstain completely from any and all acts of authoritative government* which could in any way curtail A.A.'s freedom under God.

We expect our Conference always to try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love — one member to another.



WARRANTY
SIX

“Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of Alcoholics Anonymous.

May our General Service Conference be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty.”



WARRANTY
SIX

CONCEPT XII – CONSIDERATIONS

How do we guard against becoming a “seat of perilous wealth or power”?

How do we practice prudent use of our Seventh Tradition contributions and literature revenue?

CONCEPT XII - CONSIDERATIONS

Do we ensure the spiritual liberties of all A.A. members by not placing any member in the position of absolute authority over others?

Do we try to reach important decisions by thorough discussion, vote and, where possible, substantial unanimity?

CONCEPT XII – CONSIDERATIONS

As guardians of A.A.'s traditions, are we ever justified in being personally punitive?

Are we careful to avoid public controversy?

CONCEPT XII –
A FINAL
CONSIDERATION

Do we always try to treat each other with mutual respect and love?

MUTUAL RESPECT AND
LOVE: THE
INTERSECTION OF 36
(OR 42) IDEALS

“PRACTICE THESE
PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR
AFFAIRS”

- 12 Steps 1-honesty 2-hope 3-faith 4-courage 5-integrity 6-willingness 7-humility 8-self discipline 9-love 10-perseverance 11-spiritual awareness 12-service
- 12 Traditions 1-unity 2-trust 3-identity 4-autonomy 5-purpose 6-solidarity 7-responsibility 8-fellowship 9-structure 10-neutrality 11-anonymity 12-spirituality
- 12 Concepts 1-unity 2-conscience 3-trust 4-equality 5-consideration 6-responsibility 7-balance 8-delegation 9-ability 10-clarity 11-humility 12-guidelines (1-selflessness 2-realism 3-representation 4-dialogue 5-compassion 6-respect)

“CONCEPT XII AND THE SIX WARRANTIES”
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