

# ANONYMITY PRIVACY CONFIDENTIALITY

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# ANONYMITY

From the dictionary

From the Traditions

From Bill's Writings



- ▶ Anonymity: the quality or state of being anonymous
- ▶ Anonymous: not named or identified

ANONYMITY  
FROM THE DICTIONARY

- ▶ Tradition 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 films.
- ▶ Tradition 12: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

# ANONYMITY

## FROM THE TRADITIONS

- ▶ “If I were to outline a Tradition for Anonymity it might run as follows:
- ▶ “1. It should be the privilege of each individual AA to cloak himself with as much personal anonymity as he desires. His fellow AAs should respect his wishes and help guard whatever status he wants to assume.

# ANONYMITY

FROM BILL'S WRITINGS – PERSONAL ANONYMITY

- ▶ “2. Conversely, the individual AA ought to respect the feeling of his group as to anonymity. If his group wishes to be more anonymous than he does, he ought to go along with them until they change their views.

## ANONYMITY

FROM BILL'S WRITINGS – GROUP ANONYMITY

- ▶ “3. With very rare exceptions it ought to be a national tradition that no member of Alcoholics Anonymous shall ever feel free to publish his name or picture (in connection with his Alcoholics Anonymous activities) in any medium of public circulation, or by radio. Of course this should not restrict the free use of his name in other public activities, provided he does not disclose his AA connection.

## ANONYMITY

FROM BILL'S WRITINGS – PUBLIC ANONYMITY

- ▶ “4. If for some extraordinary reason, for the good of AA as a whole, a member thinks it desirable to completely drop his anonymity, he should only do so after consulting the older members of his local group. If he is to make a nationwide public appearance as an AA the matter ought to be referred to our Central Office (GSO).”
- ▶ The Language of the Heart, pp 15-16

# ANONYMITY

## FROM BILL'S WRITINGS – PUBLIC EXCEPTIONS



Personal Anonymity: Individual AA members should be as anonymous, or not, as they wish. Other AAs should honor that choice.

Public Anonymity: At the level of press, radio, film, (world wide web), AAs should not identify ourselves as AA members by name or picture.

## ANONYMITY- SUMMARY

- ▶ What are the limits of personal vs public anonymity?
- ▶ Bill W: “In most places, but not all, it is customary for AAs to use their own names when speaking before public or semi-public gatherings. This is done to impress audiences that we no longer fear the stigma of alcoholism. If, however, newspaper reporters are present they are earnestly requested not to use the names of any of the alcoholics speakers on the program. This preserves the principle of anonymity so far as the general public is concerned and at the same time represents us as a group of alcoholics who no longer fear to let our friends know that we have been very sick people.
- ▶ The Language of the Heart, p 19.

# ANONYMITY

- ▶ Technology based communication, including the internet, is composed of many media.
- ▶ The World Wide Web (including unrestricted social media) is generally considered to be at the public level, hence no AA member ought reveal his AA membership by name or picture.
- ▶ Other technology media such as telephone, email and texting are at the level of personal anonymity, hence up to each individual. But we must honor the individual's choice. (And not assume it.)

## ANONYMITY – AND TECHNOLOGY

PRIVACY



- ▶ The quality or state of being apart from company or observation : seclusion. - Webster
- ▶ Privacy is the ability of an individual or group to seclude themselves, or information about themselves, and thereby express themselves selectively. The boundaries and content of what is considered private differ among cultures and individuals, but share common themes.
- ▶ When something is private to a person, it usually means that something is inherently special or sensitive to them. - Wikipedia.

## PRIVACY – THE DICTIONARY

- ▶ Private information may include such things as addresses, phone numbers, and AA membership.
- ▶ What is considered private varies from person to person, and situation to situation.

## PRIVACY – COMMENTS

CONFIDENTIALITY



- ▶ **Confidential:**  
Spoken, written, acted on, etc., in strict privacy or secrecy; secret.  
– *dictionary.com*
- ▶ **Confidential:** Intended to be kept secret. - *Bing*
- ▶ **Confidentiality** involves a set of rules or a promise that limits access or places restrictions on certain types of information. – *Wikipedia.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY – THE DICTIONARY



- ▶ Confidential information is information that someone has asked be kept secret, or has been given in a context that would indicate it should be kept secret.
- ▶ Example might be information shared in Sponsor/Sponsee conversations.
- ▶ Something said in confidence would be considered private.

## CONFIDENTIALITY – COMMENTS

# ANONYMITY PRIVACY CONFIDENTIALITY

Compare and Contrast

- ▶ I will speak here of anonymity in the personal anonymity sense. Public anonymity is another consideration.
- ▶ Someone's AA membership is a personal, private choice. Hence I regard Anonymity as a subset of Privacy.
- ▶ Privacy, and Confidentiality, depend on personal choice. Who or what is Private or Confidential varies from person to person and situation to situation.
- ▶ In all three cases, we need to take care about assuming what someone else considers private or confidential;

## COMMENTS

- ▶ Joe sends Mike an email with Pete's name, address and phone number. AA is not mentioned in the email.
- ▶ Sally sends Daisy an email with Peggy's name, address and phone number and mentions that Daisy is in the program.
- ▶ An AA website posts a flyer listing Don at 918-555-1234 as the contact person. Don has given permission.
- ▶ Larry sends Sue a text telling her that Dave is in the hospital.

## EXAMPLES