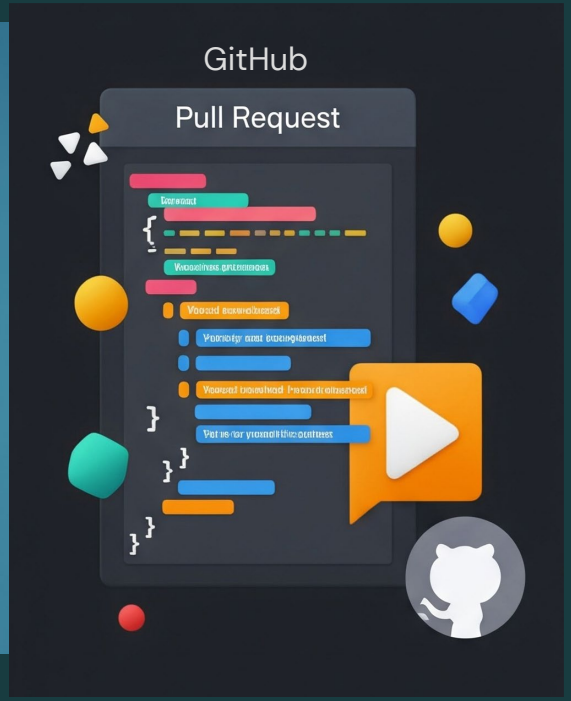
National AA Technology Workshop
7 November 2025

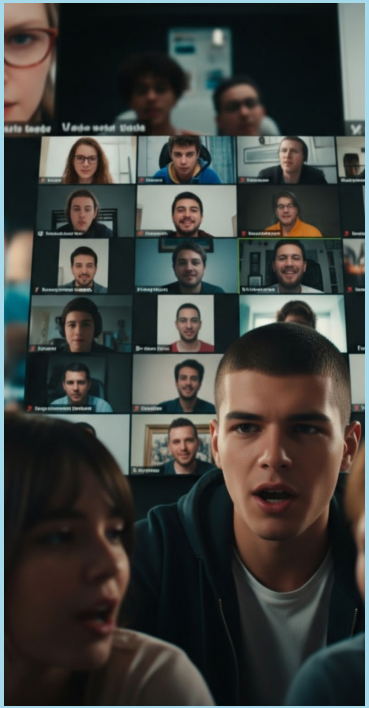
Spiritual Principles for Virtual A.A. Meetings

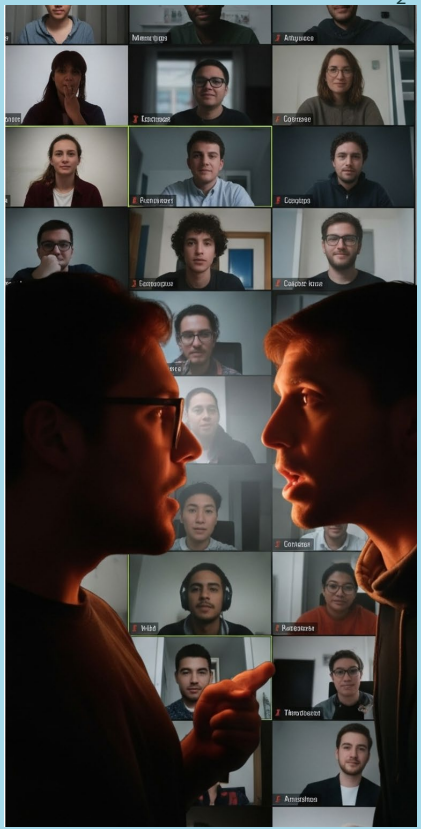
Traditions & Concepts

Allise B., P75 A67 Newsletter Chair
and recovering techie

The Core Problem







Technology facilitates collaboration

vs.

Technology impedes collaboration

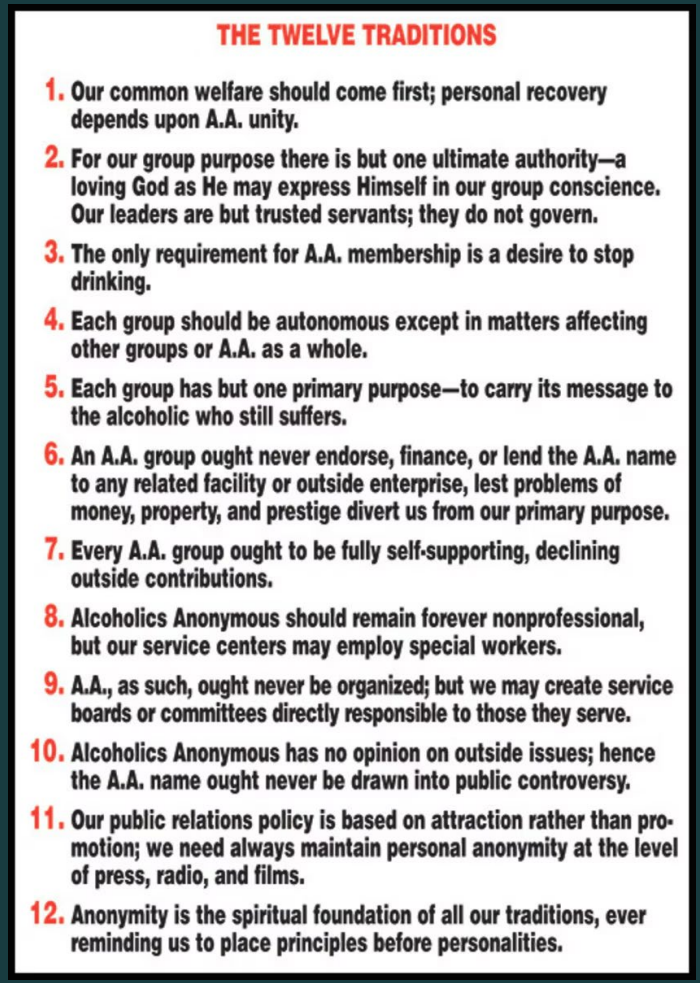
Our Guiding Principles for a Virtual Fellowship

Solving tech challenges requires two of A.A.'s core sets of principles:

The 12 Traditions
The 12 Concepts

The 12 Traditions

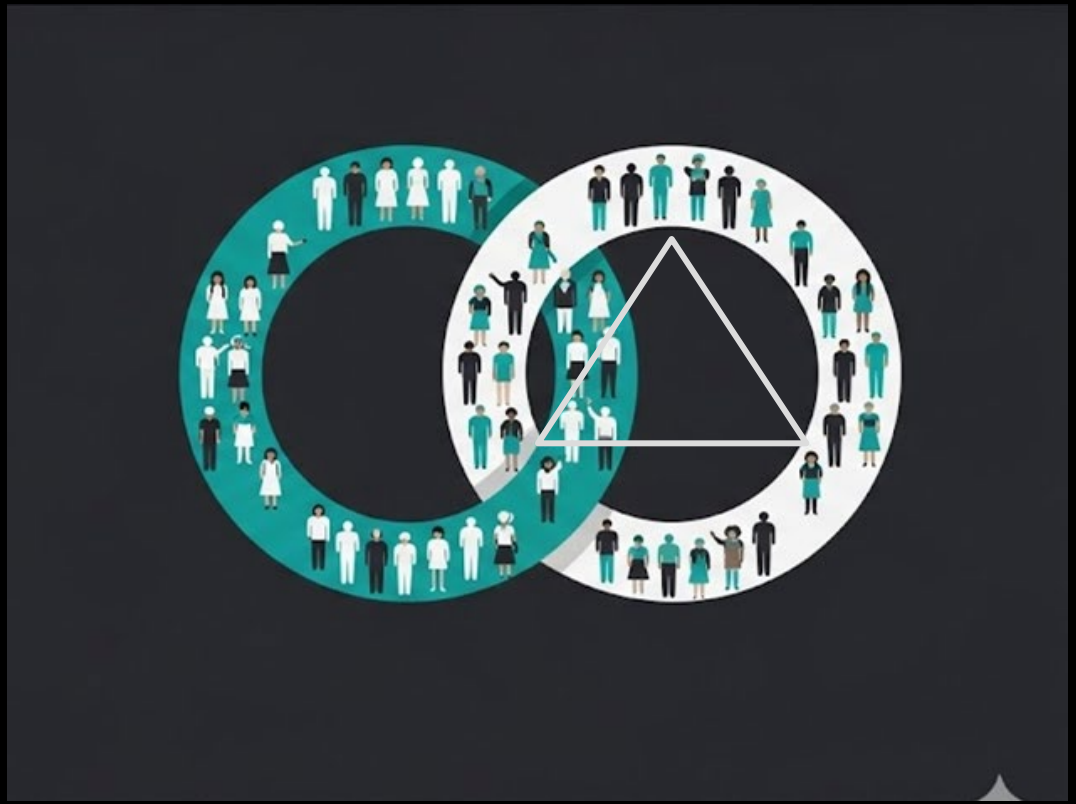
Our "*why*," which ensures unity, purpose, and safety.



THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

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

Traditions 1 & 3: Welcoming



Tradition 1: Unity

How do we welcome newcomers online?

- Calling on visitors first
- Inviting to “Parking Lot” after the meeting
- Offering newcomer packets or sponsor lists

Tradition 3: Membership

Handling "Open" vs. "Closed" meeting policies online—welcoming all who have a desire to stop drinking.

- Don't assume a teenager is a disruptor or a well-dressed person is not an alcoholic.
- Be gracious if it's a Closed meeting—refer them to appropriate resources.

Traditions 2 & 4:
Group Conscience & Consideration

Tradition 2: Group Conscience

Decisions about how to handle group situations should be group decisions.

- Might be the whole Group Conscience.
- Might be the Tech Team Conscience unless someone asks for wider consultation.
- Our question should always be: What would a loving God, speaking through our group conscience, have us do?

Tradition 4: Consideration

Consider the effects of your group's actions on A.A. as a whole.

- Look at the schedule when starting a new meeting.
- Would you better serve A.A. as a whole if you started one on a different day or time?

Tradition 5: Our Primary Purpose

Our primary purpose is to help the still-suffering alcoholic.

- Consider all actions from a newcomer's viewpoint.
- Locking down everything possible worsens the meeting experience.
- Use Big Book solutions so that *fear* of disruptors doesn't limit newcomers' opportunities.
- Concept 6 balance issue

Perennial Barriers
Accessibility & Inclusion

Institutionalization

- Medical Issues

- Legal Issues

Communication

- Oral Languages

- Hearing Issues

Availability

- Homebound

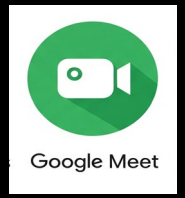
- Scheduling

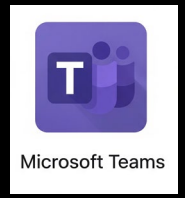
Traditions 6, 7 & 8: Self-Sufficiency

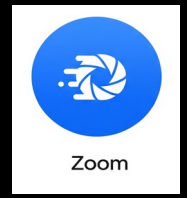
Tradition 6: Non -affiliation
Don't affiliate with platforms—it's an "online meeting," not a "Zoom meeting."

Tradition 7: Self -support
Providing the group's tech needs is the group's responsibility—not one person's.

Tradition 8: Special Workers
It's okay to hire help—if the group can afford it.





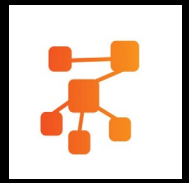


Expertise

Technology

Funding

Tech Host


Tech 12

Interpreter

Tradition 10

Tradition 10 (Outside Issues):
Keep outside issues outside.

- Distinguish between:
  - inappropriate *vs.*
  - offensive (obscenity, hatred & personal attacks).
- Opportunity to teach Traditions and Concepts.

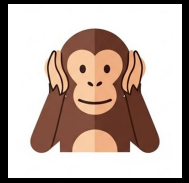
Religion

Politics

Alcohol Reform

Obscenity

Hatred


Personal Attacks

Tradition 11: Anonymity

Maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film, which includes the Internet.

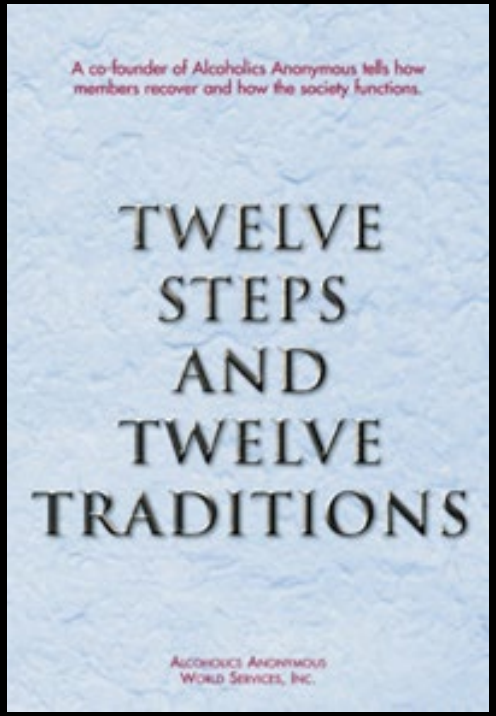
- No recording of faces.
- Scrub your audio recording of last names before posting (living and dead).

Cover or blur faces

No last names of living

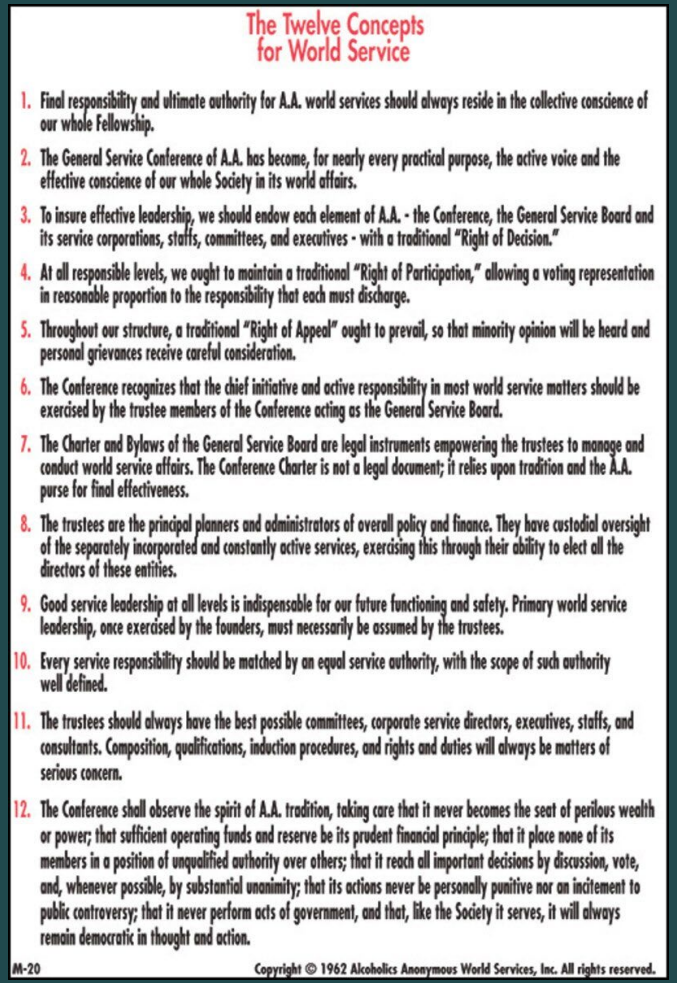
No last names of dead

Tradition 12: Principles before Platforms



The 12 Concepts

Our "*how*" which provides the structure for getting the work done.



The Twelve Concepts for World Service

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.
3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. - the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives - with a traditional "Right of Decision."
4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.
7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.
8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.
9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
12. 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.

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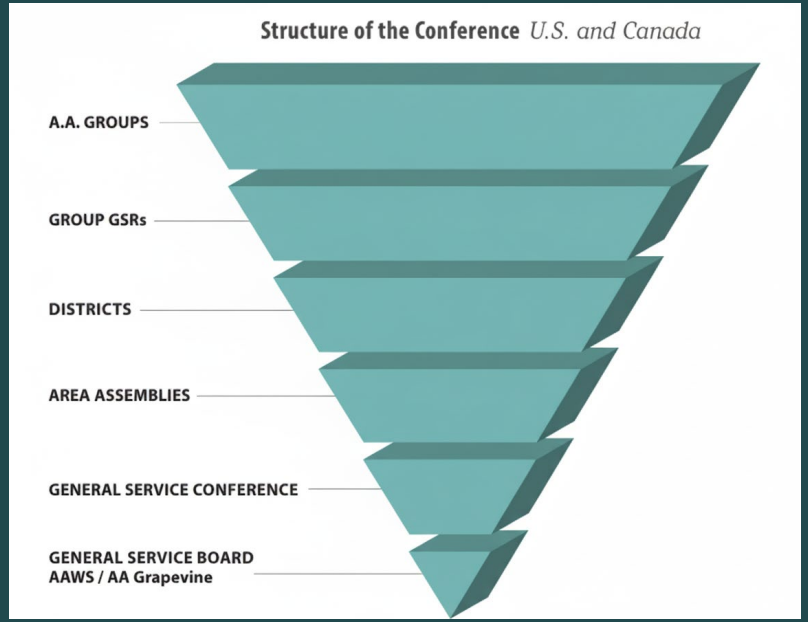
Concepts apply at *all levels* of the Conference Structure

- Home Groups & Meetings
- Districts
- Areas
- Conference



Concepts 1, 2 & 10: Delegating to Trusted Servants

Concept 1: Groups are in charge
The group delegates authority & responsibility to a tech team.

Concept 2: Delegated Authority
A tech team accepts the responsibility.

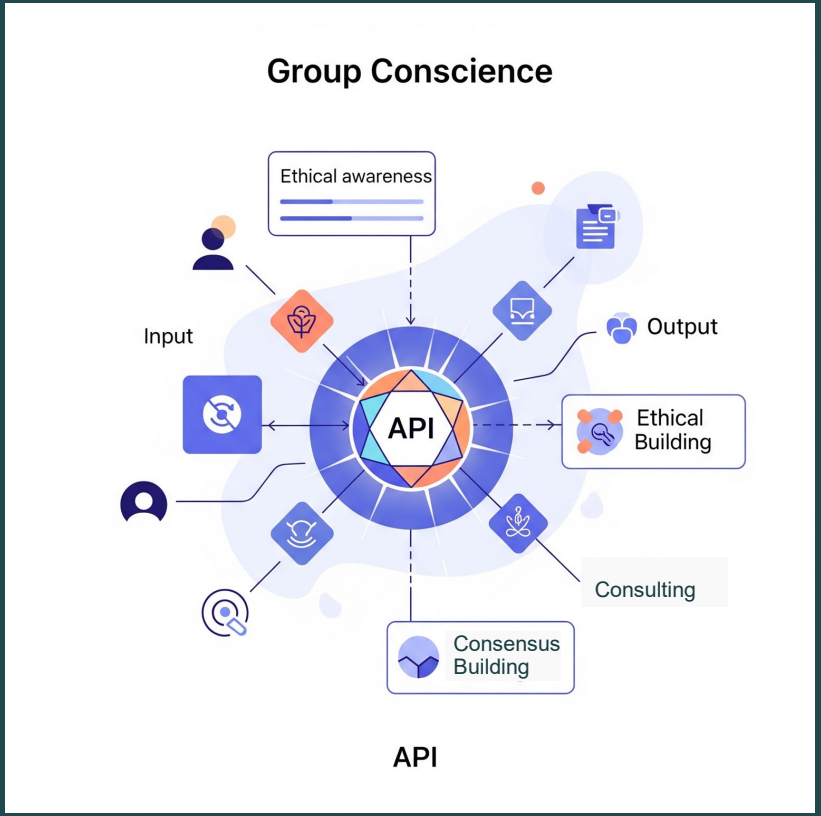
Concept 10: Authority matches Responsibility
The group delegates matched authority & responsibility to a tech team.

Concept 11: The best possible committees ~~s~~
Rights & and duties matters of serious concern

- The group shouldn't be reliant on one person subject to human frailties.
- No one should feel the whole operation rests on their shoulders—they need backup.
- If only one competent techie:
  - train more or
  - join forces with another meeting/group.
- Delegate clear duties.

Concept 4:
The Right of Participation

Concept 4: The API for the Group Conscience



Core Principle: The right to be heard and considered. It guarantees every participant a seat at the table.

Voice vs. Vote:
Participation = Read/Comment Access
Voting = Write/Commit Access

The Value of Dissent: Bug bounty for our group conscience. The minority opinion might highlight a critical vulnerability in the majority's logic.

Applying the Concept: Two Environments

The Online-Only Arena

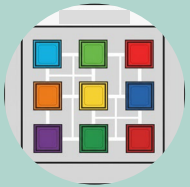
The Hybrid Challenge

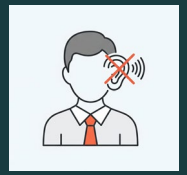
The Online -Only Arena: Challenges & Solutions

Challenge	Solution
The "Loudest Voice": Dominance by connection or confidence	**Utilize Platform Tools:** The "raise hand" feature becomes the single-threaded queue.
The Chat Dilemma: "Meeting within a meeting"	**Establish Chat Norms:** Group conscience decides its purpose (e.g., only tech support).
Anonymity vs. Presence: Camera-off culture (could require camera-on participation)	**Active Chairing:** The chair becomes a network moderator, actively polling for input.

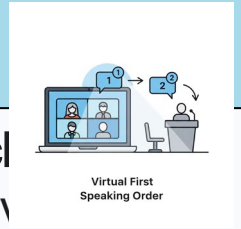
vecteezy_six-flat icons-of-megaphones by Carlos Avilaa

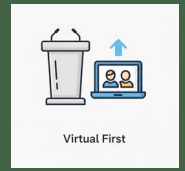
Hybrid: Bridging Two Worlds



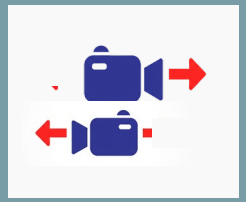


Challenge	Solution
The "Us vs. Them" Divide (Online members are forgotten as faceless boxes)	**The Hybrid Host / Tech Host:** A dedicated serv advocate for online members.
Audio & Visual Inequality (Can't hear, can't be seen)	**Invest in a Central Mic & "Equal Gaze" Camera:** Ensure a shared sensory experience.
Second-Class Participation (Online hands are missed)	**"Virtual First" Speaking Order:** The chair intentionally calls on online members first.





Hybrid -Specific Integrations



The "Equal Gaze" Camera Setup:

Position the camera so the physical room can see the online members and vice versa. Fosters a single, unified group.

The Chat as Official Record:

The Hybrid Host reads relevant chat comments aloud to the physical room, officially entering them into the meeting's proceedings and alerting in-person attendees.

Regular Tech Check-ins:

The chair pauses: "How are our online members doing? Are there any questions or hands I'm not seeing?" This is a direct implementation of Concept 4.

Core Practices for Virtual Sobriety

Digital Group Conscience:

Use the platform's polling feature for clear, anonymous, and efficient decisions. It equalizes the vote, removing bandwidth and personality from the equation.

Mindful Muting:

Muting yourself is an act of service and humility. It's the digital equivalent of "one person speaks at a time."

Spiritual Spotlight:

The chair or tech host uses the spotlight feature not just for the main speaker, but for the person asking a question. It says, "We see you, and we are listening."

Mute and spotlight images: Flaticon.com

Concept 12:

Spiritual Safeguards

The Warranties

Warranty 1: No perilous power

- No single person should hold all the passwords.
  - Groups have been held hostage.
  - Sudden illness or accident can derail the group.
- Consider how members will find you if accounts/platforms change (Meeting Guide, OIAA, Intergroup, Email list, Website).

Warranty 2: Prudent reserve

- Must budget for tech replacement:
  - Insurance or equipment replacement (flood, theft, damage).
  - New annual accounts if one person controls passwords.

Warranty 5: No personal punishment

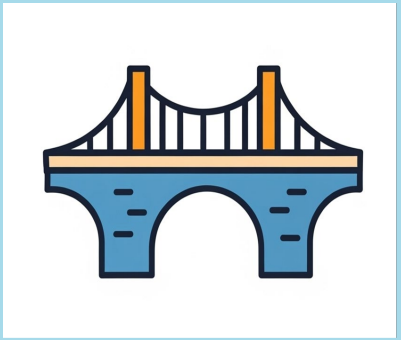
- How to handle disruption without being punitive or cutting off Right of Appeal.
  - Use a waiting room and chat with them.
  - Co-hosts know not to let the person back in before resolution.
  - Consider distinction between offensive & inappropriate.
  - Disgruntled newcomers can damage reputation.
- Internal conflicts should not become public.

Warranty 6: Democratic action

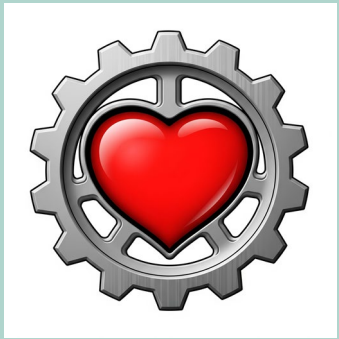
- The group must be educated (in non-tech terms) to participate in tech decisions.
  - Educating others is part of the democratic process.
  - Invite someone to the group conscience who can translate between techies and non techies if needed.

Key Takeaways: The Upgrade

Our Traditions (Unity, Purpose, Anonymity) are the "WHY" that must guide every tech decision.



Our Concepts (Group Conscience, Delegation, Participation) are the "HOW" we implement solutions fairly and effectively.



Practical structures like a Tech Team, Hybrid Host, and clear group norms are how we put these principles into action.

Keep our Traditions and Concepts in mind as your group develops its conscience on its tech practices.

Be ready to explain them to others—or to ask questions if you don't know how they apply!

Send suggestions to: allise.b@aa-seta.org

- Please send suggestions for improving this presentation.
- Thank you for allowing me to be of service today.

Thank you

Send suggestions to: allise.b@aa-seta.org

Gallery of unused graphics upcoming -- retained for NAATW expansion

Tradition 4: Consideration

Consider the effects of your group's actions on A.A. as a whole.

- Look at the schedule when starting a new meeting.
- Would you better serve A.A. as a whole if you started one on a different day or time?