

TRADITION SEVEN

Every MA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Tradition Seven means that we take care of ourselves. As addicts, we were takers — a burden on everyone. Now that we are clean and sober, we are grateful givers. Since Tradition Six admonishes us not to endorse, finance, or lend the MA name to outside enterprises, it only makes sense that we do not accept outside contributions either.

One purpose of Tradition Seven is to keep MA from getting rich. If we were to accept outside contributions there might be continuous conflicts about how to handle our money. Again, as stated in Tradition Six, this could lead us away from our primary purpose of carrying the message to the marijuana addict who still suffers. We must not let the material needs of MA get in the way of our spiritual pursuits. After all, MA in action calls for contribution of much time and little money.

By staying financially independent, we do not have to become obliged to any outside sources or contributors. We remain unaffected by outside financial influences because we do not depend on their contributions. This is why it is important that we support ourselves and pay rent to facilities we use for our meetings even though the rent may be nominal.

Acceptance of any gift or contribution from an outside source that may carry with it an obligation by the fellowship is truly unwise and defeats the spirit of Tradition

Seven. By paying our own way, we remain free; we have earned the privilege of making our own decisions.

Our Seventh Tradition money goes to paying group expenses such as rent, coffee, literature, chips, and refreshments. As groups get larger and begin collecting more than they need to cover these basic expenses, they usually place a small amount aside for emergencies (called a “prudent reserve”) and then start sending any excess funds to the local service committee. These funds are used to carry the message of recovery, helping with expenditures such as local newsletters, public information mailings, local hotlines, and post office fees.

Similarly, local service committees usually send any monies above their prudent reserve to World Services to further carry the MA message by typesetting literature, sending out meeting starter kits, maintaining our web site, and preserving MA unity between the districts. The money is also used to pay for the annual World Service Conference, as well as the business expenses incurred by the trustees in operating MA throughout the year.

A group is not self-supporting until it pays its own expenses and contributes its fair share to the larger society. The group not only supports itself but MA as a whole. That is what is meant by “fully” self-supporting, since there would be no groups without the fellowship. A group that does not raise enough money during meetings may raise it by having fund-raisers or events. We all have to pull together, and by doing so we learn that we are truly part of something greater than ourselves.