

TRADITION TWELVE

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

The word anonymity means namelessness and the principle behind the word is selflessness. The purpose of anonymity is to ensure that the spirit of the many prevails over the selfishness and self-will of the individual. Anonymity prevents anyone from becoming known as the spokesperson or leader of MA. There is no room for rationalizing that we are doing MA a great service by breaking our anonymity.

Humility expressed by anonymity is the greatest protection our fellowship has. The spirit of anonymity means that we give up any desire we have for personal recognition. We have learned that the price of spirituality and serenity is self-sacrifice.

As individuals, we had to change our behavior and give up our old ideas in order to recover. We had to sacrifice marijuana. We had to let go of our "ISMs" — *I, Self, and Me*. We had to learn humility and give up pride. Then we gave time and energy to carry the message of recovery to other marijuana addicts.

Groups must also make sacrifices to survive, just as individuals do. The Twelve Traditions are a list of the sacrifices we make in order to preserve the unity of the society. We have to keep in mind that 100% anonymity is as vital to the life of MA as being 100% clean is to the life of the individual member.

Anonymity is not intended to keep us from identifying ourselves publicly as marijuana addicts, provided we are guided by the Eleventh Tradition. Nor is it intended to prevent us from avoiding the stigma that may be associated with that label. We have learned that there is nothing shameful about being addicts who accept our disease honestly and continue to take positive action towards recovery.

In fact, many people find their way to our program because they are attracted to the positive changes they have witnessed in their friends who are members of MA. These people learn of us through conversations with members. Some meetings are even open to people who are not addicted to marijuana so they can see what MA is all about.

Within the fellowship, anonymity is also necessary; we must take special care to remember the adage, "What is said here stays here." When we allow discussion outside of the meetings about another member's intimate secrets, trust will be lost because that story is being circulated throughout the community.

Discussing identities and the contents of stories outside meeting rooms is gossip. By engaging in gossip we turn our focus away from the principles of the program and instead focus on the personalities involved. This derails our quest for serenity. What we receive from stories are not the specific details of each other's history but the experience, strength, and hope each of us has gained from our separate journeys in recovery.

We cannot afford to alienate members. When someone comes to Marijuana Anonymous they are often attracted by the word "Anonymous." Knowing anonymity

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will be respected helps the newcomer make a commitment to recovery.

Putting principles before personalities means that we listen to God's will for us and do what is right no matter who is involved. We practice the spiritual principles of honesty, humility, compassion, tolerance, and patience with everyone, whether we like them or not. Anonymity in action makes it impossible for personalities to come before principles because our spiritual foundation becomes more important than our individual egos.