

11th Tradition Overview

Attraction or Promotion?

Please help support others that are suffering by letting them know of our program.

Tradition 11 says "*Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.*" In OA we have found hope at last, a way out of the bondage of food and compulsive eating. The eleventh tradition gives us some guidelines for carrying OA's message, guidelines all OA members need to be aware of as we begin to share our program with those outside of OA. The following information was taken from **Tradition 11** on page 193 of the OA book called "*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*"

- The first suggestion is that we publicize OA to the public at large without promoting it. Thus, we use the public media of communication such as: radio, television, newspapers, billboards, films displays at health fairs, etc... to provide factual information about our program. We want people to know what OA is and how to find our meetings. In that advertising, however, we do not promote OA with personal appeals, celebrity endorsements, or other such means of persuasion.
- Use of the media in this nonprofessional way allows OA to attract to itself those who are ready to take advantage of what we have to offer. Few of us who are now part of this Fellowship tried OA immediately the first time we heard about it. We may have needed this recovery program then, but it took a while for some of us to decide to come and be willing to work the steps. Until we were ready, nobody could have "sold" us this program.
- We do everything we can to tell people what OA is, how it works, and where we meet. We don't publish "before and after" pictures of our members in the advertising media. We don't promise quick weight loss or guarantee results.
- The 11th tradition states that all individuals maintain their personal anonymity when speaking of their OA participation in any public medium of communication. In keeping the 11th tradition, those of us who write books, or are interviewed for a newspaper story or a radio or TV broadcast have two options.
 - 1) We can avoid calling ourselves OA members (even if we say we're compulsive overeaters). Then we are free to use our full names or have our faces appear. Here the emphasis is on the individual, and we are not connected publicity with the OA program.
 - 2) Our other option is to go ahead and identify ourselves as OA members. When we do this we make sure our faces are not shown and our last names are not used. When we are careful we respect the 11th tradition in this way, the emphasis remains on OA, rather than on ourselves.

- In dealing with the media, we sometimes make the mistake of assuming the interviewers and photographers already know about OA's tradition of anonymity. Many media professionals have only a superficial knowledge about OA. It's up to us to explain the 11th tradition and ask them to help us protect our anonymity.
- **How do we practice the 11th tradition?**
 1. How does our group make its meeting place and time known to compulsive eaters who might want to attend?
 2. How does our group inform the public or support our intergroup in informing the public about the OA program?
 3. Is our OA recovery attractive enough to draw other compulsive eaters to OA?
 4. Do we talk about OA so fanatically, or so often, that we make it unattractive to the people in our lives?
 5. Are we careful to keep members' faces and names out of the story when we discuss OA with reporters or write about it ourselves?
 6. Does our group or intergroup provide information about our eleventh tradition to the news in our area?
 7. Do we ask them to keep all members' anonymity in news stories about OA?
 8. Are we willing to speak up for the eleventh tradition whenever we see it being ignored?

"Attraction rather than promotion" is good for us and essential for the OA Fellowship. Our individual recovery depends upon this unusual brand of public relations. The eleventh tradition is based on faith in our program and in that Power greater than ourselves which guides compulsive overeaters to our doors. All we have to do is let the facts about OA and its principles be known. We can depend upon our Higher Power and this miraculous program to attract those who can benefit by what OA has to offer. When we maintain our tradition of anonymity we ensure that Overeaters Anonymous will remain a spiritual Fellowship, supporting all of us in our recovery.

~ Kas, OA Marin Public Information Coordinator