

USING THE TRADITIONS & ABCs (and Ds) TO IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

TRADITION 1 (Keywords/Phrases): Common welfare; Personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity. **Quote:** ...A commitment to unity for the sake of our individual growth, which is a basic premise to any healthy relationship. "Personal progress for the greatest number" brings the desire for individual progress into harmony with everyone's desire for progress. Emphasizing the common values we share can restore trust when individual interests come into conflict. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 261)

- A. How often do I catch my significant other doing something that I praise them for?
- B. Do I offer small acts of kindness and compassion?
- C. Am I willing to compromise or do I have to win and be right?
- D. How do I care for myself in order to promote the common welfare and unity of our relationship?

TRADITION 2 (Keywords/Phrases): One authority – a loving God expressed in our group conscience; Our leaders are but trusted servants. **Quote:** ...Emphasizing that we recognize only one ultimate authority for our relationships – a loving Higher Power. We listen to everyone's concern with an open mind, and we don't make a decision until we have had an informed discussion with everyone involved. We come to accept this "group conscience," even if the final decision is not what we originally wanted. We are all equal, even though we each have our own responsibilities within the relationship. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 261-2)

- A. Do we each have our own responsibilities in the relationship?
- B. Do I believe that God is in charge?
- C. Do we discuss things with an open mind, pray about our choices, and compromise on conflicts?

TRADITION 3 (Keywords/Phrases): Gather together for mutual aid; Have no other affiliations. **Quote:** ...Helps us determine the mutual goals of our relationships and to support each other in attaining these goals. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262)

- A. Am I as interested in my significant other's recovery as I am in my own personal growth and well-being?
- B. Do I accept myself and my significant other exactly as we are?
- C. Is my commitment to our relationship a priority?

TRADITION 4 (Keywords/Phrases): Should be autonomous. **Quote:** ...We accept that although we share a relationship, we are also individuals, fully capable of making personal decisions on our own, provided that they do not adversely affect each other. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262)

- A. Do I understand that I and my significant other both have rights as individuals?
- B. Do I use the slogan "Live and Let Live" for others?
- C. Do I avoid becoming obsessed in my relationship with my significant other by using the tool of detachment?

TRADITION 5 (Keywords/Phrases): By practicing the 12 steps, by encouraging & understanding, by welcoming & giving comfort. **Quote:** ...Have a purpose to our relationships, but fulfilling that purpose to taking care of ourselves before offering support to others. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262)

- A. Do I encourage my significant other without giving advice?
- B. Am I working my Steps and practicing my program to the best of my ability?
- C. Do I give comfort and encouragement to my significant other who may be in AA, Alanon, Alateen, or may not be practicing a program?
- D. Do I understand that my significant other is sick with a disease?

TRADITION 6 (Keywords/Phrases): Lest problems of money, prosperity & prestige, divert us from our primary spiritual aid; Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate. **Quote:** ...We accept that the spiritual health of our relationships is a top priority, and we avoid any involvements that would distract or divert us from attaining this. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262)

- A. Do I and my significant other have healthy, regular communications about money and finances?
- B. Am I resentful if my significant other is unable to fulfill money and financial obligations?
- C. What financial boundaries have I employed to keep me focused on the spiritual wellbeing of our relationship?

TRADITION 7 (Keywords/Phrases): Be fully self-supporting. **Quote:** ...Be self-supporting in our relationships, “declining outside contributions,” which refers to more than financial support. We also have a responsibility to care for ourselves emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Depending on others to fulfill our needs or carry out our responsibilities invites disappointment and resentment. Assuming responsibilities that others should fulfill for themselves robs them of their dignity and self-respect and upsets the balance in what should be a relationship of mutual respect among equals. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262)

- A. Do I assume responsibilities that my significant other should fulfill for themselves?
- B. Has my over dependence on my significant other, instead of on my Higher Power, contributed to low self-esteem, distrust in decision making, or fear of abandonment?
- C. Does my criticism of my significant other rob them of their dignity and self-respect?

TRADITION 8 (Keywords/Phrases): Remain forever non-professional; employ special workers. **Quote:** ...Our Twelfth Step work “...should remain forever non-professional...,” we help those we love by sharing who we are and leading by the power of example, not by acting as experts and offering unsolicited advice. This Tradition also makes allowance for the times when a relationship needs the assistance of professional expertise. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262)

- A. Do I allow my significant other make the bed, brush their teeth, wear what they want, and be in charge of their day, without me telling them how to do it?
- B. Do I recognize that I am not a professional counselor or resident expert for every issue in my relationship with my significant other?
- C. Do I make allowances for the times when our relationship needs the assistance of a professional expert?

TRADITION 9 (Keywords/Phrases): Ought never be organized; But we may create service boards or committees.

Quote: ...Our relationships... “ought never be organized.” While this doesn’t mean they should be disorganized, it suggests simplicity. We let go of rigidity and regulation, keeping in mind that equality is sustained by order, balance, and a division of responsibilities. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 262-3)

- A. Am I able to trust my significant other with certain responsibilities?
- B. Do I feel the need to control and organize everything without input from my significant other?
- C. Do I recognize that I can only change myself, which requires my whole attention?

TRADITION 10 (Keywords/Phrases): Have no opinion on outside issues. Quote: ...Our groups have no opinion on outside issues, and thereby avoid public controversy. We can apply this to our relationships by minding our own business and not arguing about issues that have nothing to do with us. We realize that others have as much right to their opinions as we do to ours, and we give them the same dignity and respect we want for ourselves. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 263)

- A. Am I overly concerned with my significant other’s actions and behaviors?
- B. Do I recognize the difference between an argument and a discussion with my significant other?
- C. Do I use the Serenity Prayer to clarify outside issues with my significant other?

TRADITION 11 (Keywords/Phrases): Attraction rather than promotion; Maintain personal anonymity. Quote: ...Simply setting a good example, rather than trying to convince, persuade, or prod. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 263)

- A. Do my actions with my significant other speak louder than my words?
- B. Do I say what I mean, but don’t say it meanly?
- C. Is my working the program attractive to my significant other?
- D. Do I respect the confidences my significant other shares with me and their anonymity if they are working a program?

TRADITION 12 (Keywords/Phrases): Anonymity is the spiritual foundation; Place principles above personalities.

Quote: ...We are peers among equals, no better or worse than one another. We learn to act with humility, doing what is right rather than seeking attention and fame. We can allow others to be as they are, giving ourselves the same courtesy. This approach is a proven way to defuse conflict, by taking disagreements less personally. ...Our self-worth can grow, and our ties to others become healthier and stronger. (Discovering Choices, Our Recovery in Relationships. Pg. 263)

- A. Do I focus on our common interests rather than our differences?
- B. Do I allow my significant other’s personality have too much influence on our decisions?
- C. Do I communicate with my significant other by using “I” instead of “You”?
- D. Do I share my feelings with my significant other honestly and appropriately?