

TRADITION TEN

Nicotine Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues hence the nicotine Anonymous name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition Ten helps remind us to fulfill our primary purpose, which is to carry the message to the nicotine addict that still suffers. Therefore, Nicotine Anonymous should not divert its attention by involving itself in outside issues or public controversy.

As recovering nicotine addicts we know that the use of nicotine is harmful and some may, in fact, believe that it should be banned, controlled, or limited. Therefore, it is tempting to say that we should support lawsuits against tobacco companies, take out ads that support outlawing nicotine, participate with groups that want to ban smoking, or support politicians who seek to limit places where people can smoke.

Tradition 10 clearly tells us "No." We have no opinion as a group about tobacco companies, various nicotine products, or the nicotine use of others. True, we as individual addicts may have differing opinions on these subjects. However, as a group, as Nicotine Anonymous, we state or take no position.

Smoking, dipping, chewing -- these are things that we all enjoyed at one point while using nicotine. How we stopped using, how we came to believe, how we gained freedom from this powerful addiction -- these are the things we share in order to help the person who is still suffering.

No member, using the name of Nicotine Anonymous **OR** claiming to be a spokesperson for our program **OR** as a representative of Nicotine Anonymous, should ever express an opinion, at the public level, on outside controversial issues, particularly those of politics, nicotine reform, or religion. Nicotine Anonymous neither endorses nor opposes any cause or candidate. We do not even oppose the manufacture, sale, or use of nicotine products. As a fellowship, we have no opinion on government subsidies to tobacco farmers or when, how, and where nicotine is packaged or consumed. Although Nicotine

Anonymous is a spiritual program, we have no opinion on religion or religious institutions. Many of us come from various religions and political backgrounds. To insist that any member support a particular religion or political cause would not only destroy our fellowship, but would violate the first Tradition regarding the primary importance of our common unity.

The founders of the Alcoholics Anonymous program wisely decided not to take on the alcohol manufacturers or participate in a temperance movement to ban alcohol. They realized that such a movement would be futile and would likely destroy the foundation of their recovery. Similarly, Nicotine Anonymous cannot divert from our primary purpose in order to rail against the tobacco companies or promote legislation as to how and when people make smoke, dip, or chew.

Also, many nicotine users chose to end their use of nicotine with the help of nicotine withdrawal dates such as a nicotine patch, nicotine gum, or prescription medications. Use of such substances is up to each individual and should not be dictated or criticized by the group. Providing support in order to live free of nicotine is our primary purpose, not how an individual member may choose to get free.

This Tradition may be personally difficult to live up to because we probably all have opinions on such issues. However, when we act as a representative of Nicotine Anonymous, we need to avoid public debates on such controversial issues, focusing instead on maintaining the sanity and strength of our fellowship so that we can be helpful to the nicotine addict who still suffers.

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