

Tradition Three

Short Form- The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking

Long Form- Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation .

This Tradition is packed with meaning. For A.A. is really saying to every serious drinker , "You are an A.A. member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you've gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications- even your crimes- we still can't deny you A.A. We don't want to keep you out. We aren't a bit afraid you'll harm us, never mind how twisted or violent you may be. We just want to be sure you get the same great chance for sobriety that we've had. So you're an A.A. member the minute you declare yourself." (Page 139 12 Steps and 12 Traditions)

In the preceding chapters you have learned something about alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between alcoholic and nonalcoholic. If, when you honestly want to, you find you can not quit entirely, or if when drinking you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. (Chapter 4 We Agnostics Page 44 Alcoholics Anonymous)

Men and woman drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they can not after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them the alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they gain experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks- (Chapter The Doctors Opinion Page XXVI Alcoholics Anonymous)