

## Convention Anonymity Skit

**Black: Chair**

**Blue: Bill W.**

**Red: Dr. Bob**

**(Narrator):** Aloha Everyone. My name is Jeannie G and I am an alcoholic. I am honored to serve as your Hawaii Area 17 Chair. I am excited to be here as a member among members. For my talk, I would like to present a little skit I wrote on anonymity and Tradition 11 & 12. But first, let me introduce two of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill W. and Dr. Bob. I have invited them to assist me in presenting some vital information and share their invaluable insights on our topic today. Welcome Gentlemen!

**(Narrator):** Tradition 11, long form, states: *Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed.* And Tradition 12, long form, states that *And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.*

**(Narrator):** Sounds to me that anonymity is **really** important since it is the spiritual foundation of **all** our traditions! Right gentlemen?

**(Bill W & Dr. Bob nod “Yes”)**

**(Narrator):** The pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” asks, *What is the purpose of anonymity in Alcoholics Anonymous and why is it often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth?* If we look at the history of A.A., from its beginning in 1935 until now, it is clear that anonymity serves two different yet equally vital functions. Bill, would you share the first vital function of anonymity at the personal level?

**(Bill W):** “Yes, thank you. *At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.*”

**(Narrator):** And Dr. Bob, would you share the second vital function of anonymity at the public level?

**(Dr. Bob):** “Of course I will. *At the public level of press, radio, TV, films and other media technologies such as the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those who might otherwise exploit their AA affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain.*”

**(Narrator):** Wow, those two functions of anonymity are crucial for ensuring the continued existence and growth of the Fellowship. It is an important aspect, as I personally want A.A. to be accessible for generations to come. Don't you?

**(Bill W & Dr. Bob nod 'Yes')**

**(Narrator):** In 2017 I attended the Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, aka PRAASA in Sacramento, California as a GSR. Tradition 11, was a hot topic, especially as it relates to social media, involves trust, humility, and Tradition 1, AA as a whole. Participants expressed concern about posting sobriety dates, medallions, AA jargon, and AA meeting details. Social media falls under public relations, so Tradition 11 applies.

(Narrator): Bill, would you share with us what you wrote in the 1946 Grapevine on Tradition 11?

**(Bill W):** “Sure I’d love to. *Our relations with the outside world should be characterized by modesty and anonymity. We think AA ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.*”

**(Narrator):** Bill you also wrote a statement declaring publicly the intentions, motives, and views on anonymity. Would you care to share that statement?

**(Bill W):** “Yes I would. *The word ‘anonymous’ has for us an immense spiritual significance. Subtly but powerfully, it reminds us that we are always to place principles before personalities; that we have renounced personal glorification in public; that our movement not only preaches but actually practices a true humility.*”

**(Narrator):** Wow, “Renounce personal glorification”—I love that! I looked up the word renounce and it means to ‘sacrifice for a greater end’ and the word glorification relates to my own recognition. So I must sacrifice my own personal recognition for a greater end! What a responsibility that is!

**(Narrator):** Dr. Bob, would you tell us the two ways you believe the Anonymity Tradition can be broken?

**(Dr. Bob):** “Yes, Ma’am. *There were two ways to break the Anonymity Tradition: One, by giving your name at the public level of press or radio; and two by being so anonymous that you can't be reached by other drunks: (or not telling anyone even if necessary to help them).*”

**(Narrator):** Bill, you spoke on Anonymity at the Public Level, would you care to repeat that talk with us?

**(Bill W):** *“Of course, “Great modesty and humility are needed by every AA member for his own permanent recovery. If these virtues are such vital needs to the individual, so must they be to AA as a whole. This principle of anonymity before the general public can, if we take it seriously enough, guarantee the Alcoholics Anonymous movement these sterling attributes forever. Our public relations policy should mainly rest upon the principle of attraction and seldom, if ever, upon promotion.”*

**(Bill W):** *“The old files at AA headquarters reveal many scores of experiences with broken anonymity. Most of them point to the same lessons. They tell us that we alcoholics are the biggest rationalizers in the world; that fortified with the excuse we are doing great things for AA we can, through broken anonymity, resume our old and disastrous pursuit of personal power and prestige, public honors, and money — the same implacable urges that when frustrated once caused us to drink; the same forces that are today ripping the globe apart at its seams. Moreover, they make clear that enough spectacular anonymity breakers could someday carry our whole society down into the ruinous dead end with them.”*

**(Narrator):** Again, wow! Huge responsibility!

**(Narrator):** The pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” also states that when we use digital media, we are responsible for our own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text, or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others. It was mentioned several times at PRAASA that most of the breaking of others’ anonymity happens in the likes and the comment section of social media. We make our own choices about our own anonymity but we have a greater responsibility to protect the anonymity of our fellow members. (May share a personal example if time).

**(Narrator):** Questions to ask myself:

- Do I realize that breaking my own anonymity on social media sites ultimately affects AA as a whole?
- Do I keep in mind that my posts reach far more people, more quickly than ever before, and is impossible to retract?
- Why do I want to advertise to the whole world my affiliation with AA?

**(Narrator):** Some say, “We didn’t care when we were out there drinking in public, so why not tell everybody we are now sober?” The difference is when I get sober in Alcoholics Anonymous I now have a duty to set aside my ego, and ‘renounce my personal glorification’ of my sobriety in order to protect AA as a whole. If I drink again after publicly stating I am a sober member of AA, others looking in, may and probably will say, “See AA does not work.” It is my responsibility to safeguard AA as a whole. I don’t want to be the mouthpiece for AA as a whole, odds are I will reflect negatively on AA as a whole.

**(Narrator):** Tradition 11 reminds me not to avoid taking personal credit for anything I do. Personal ambition and ego have no place in AA life.

**(Narrator):** Dr. Bob, can you share the advice you gave in that one short line about carrying the message?

**(Dr. Bob):** “Sure. *Carry the message and if you must ————— use words.*”

**(Narrator):** Hmm...”Carry the message and if you must — use words.” I love that! I heard it many years ago and it stuck with me: walking the walk is more important than talking the talk. — “That is attraction rather than promotion.”

**(Narrator):** If Dr. Bob, one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, and his wife, who dedicated their lives in self-sacrifice to carry the message of AA to over 5000 still suffering alcoholics refused to use the words “Alcoholics Anonymous” on their own burial stone, then it is only fitting that I refrain from admitting or even implying I am a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous at the level of press, radio, films and other media technologies such as the Internet! A very small contribution on my part to protect the future of Alcoholics Anonymous and for the generations to come.

**(Narrator):** It is worth noting that Dr. Bob, one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, and his wife, who devoted their lives to helping over 5000 alcoholics recover from alcoholism, chose not to have the words “Alcoholics Anonymous” on their burial stone. In light of their example, I believe it is appropriate for me to refrain from disclosing or even suggesting that I am a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous in the media, including press, radio, films, and online platforms. This is my small contribution to safeguard the future of Alcoholics Anonymous and ensure that it continues to help future generations struggling with alcoholism.

**(Narrator):** Thank you all for allowing me to be of service and for the opportunity to get a better understanding of Traditions 11, 12, and anonymity by digging deeper into the traditions that protect us from each other and help foster unity among our members.

**(Narrator):** Can we give a round of applause for Bill W and Dr. Bob! Thank you both.

**(Narrator):** Let us close with the **Declaration of Unity**:

#### **A Declaration of Unity**

This we owe to AA’s future;  
To place our common welfare first;  
To keep our Fellowship united.  
For on AA unity depend our lives,  
and the lives of those to come.