

Dear EA fellowship members,

The Board of Trustees takes its responsibilities to this organization and its membership very seriously. During the past four years we, along with our Executive Director, have introduced new literature and have updated many of our materials that had not been reviewed for decades. These new and updated pieces have been well received by the membership – people have shared with us that they are pleased to have additional and refreshed material from which to work their program. At this time, we want to respond to some feedback we have received to the changes that were made to Steps 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11 as well as to promise # 12 and tradition # 2. The board voted to make these changes in early 2018 and communicated the changes to the membership through multiple articles in The Connection at that time, based on the belief that most members read this newsletter regularly. We made these changes after a great deal of deliberation, wishing to focus on what the program tells us regarding the importance of spirituality, not religion, as well as to move away from purely masculine terms when considering a Higher Power.

Step 3 was changed in substituting the new words “our Higher Power as we understood this Higher Power” for the former words “God as we understood Him.” Step 5 was changed in substituting the words “Higher Power” for the former word “God.” Step 7 was changed by substituting the words “our Higher Power” for the former word “Him.” Step 11 was changed by substituting the words “our Higher Power as we understood this Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power’s will for us” for the former words “God, as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us.” Promise # 12 was changed by substituting the words “Higher Power” for the former word “God.” Tradition 2 was changed by substituting the words “a loving Higher Power as this Higher Power may be expressed in our group conscience” for the former words “a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.”

Our bylaws clearly state that traditions and steps can be changed if there is approval from AA, which the trustees did request and received permission to change.

The language of He, Him, His, and Himself are all masculine terms that are not helpful for people who do not view their Higher Power as a male. The language of the entire program of EA speaks of a “power greater than ourselves;” it is important that we are clear that how an individual chooses to acknowledge this power – with words like “God” or “the group” or as anything else they find helpful is – and will continue to be - their decision. In the end, substituting Higher Power for God in the steps, tradition 2, and promise 12 has the effect of putting the clear thought behind the whole of EA’s approach to “being a spiritual and not a religious program” as the first thing that people will see when they encounter our program.

The Administrative Concepts and the Bylaws that the trustees must operate under were all followed in making these changes. These guiding documents give the Board the authority to make these changes. A world-wide vote by the EA membership was not required. While these documents have always been available, we will be sharing them with the membership more proactively in the future.

The trustees regret that there has not been a full understanding of the process that we went through and the authority that EA grants to us to make the changes and a full awareness that these changes did take place more than a year ago. Our intention is to continue to communicate as best we can about the work of the trustees on behalf of the EA fellowship. We respectfully request that the work that we are doing under the approved guidelines of EA be honored. As with all feedback provided by the membership, comments about this change are being considered with care. The Board will be

undertaking a review of all EA communications to assure that we are using appropriate measures to share all information with the fellowship.

It is important to note that members who use the word “God” when they submit their shares as their experience, strength, and hope will continue to have the freedom to use the word “God.” **We strongly urge people to refer to the power greater than themselves in whatever fashion that suits them, which was the rationale for this change.** Sharing what we perceive our Higher Power to be in our own personal ways is essential.

Yours in the Program,

Scott, John, Derita, Colleen, and Elaine