

Reflections on Tradition 4

Tradition 4: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or EA as a whole.

Autonomy means freedom from external control or influence; independence. In this context it means that each group can make its own decisions, provided what they decide doesn’t affect other groups or EA as a whole. Each group plans when and where they’ll meet. They choose their own formats, not necessarily using the EA suggested format. Each group determines which EA literature they’ll use during their meeting or whether they’d opt to have EA speakers come to share their experience, strength, and hope. Your home group determines how much money it will send to EA Inter-national to help carry the message to the person who still suffers from emotional problems. None of these preferences would affect other groups or EA as a whole...— Derita P., *EAI Trustee*

Having autonomy brings freedom to choose. Knowing that each EA group can make choices for how things operate in that group allows for differences and diversity. The boundary of Tradition 4 comes into play when one EA’s group’s decisions affect all of EA. An example: if a group wants to pray the Lord’s Prayer or read Bible verses, one might think that Tradition 4 grants autonomy. But does it? Perhaps having too much religious language in such a prayer and sharing Bible verses affects EA as a whole—in terms of violating a basic EA principle: to be spiritual and not religious. Autonomy has limits... — Scott J., *EAI Vice President/Treasurer*