

Reflection from February 10, Today

When speaking with friends in the program, we must always remember to protect the information they share with us. By the same token, we need not hesitate to remind them of our need for privacy. It is so easy for us to speak of intimate details with EA friends that anyone can sometimes forget he or she is expected to remain silent. There are many advantages to having these free and easy conversations: we learn to be honest, we do not have to worry about ridicule or condemnation, and we have the opportunity to spot self-deception.

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over our emotions — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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Confidentiality in EA



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Anonymity and confidentiality are some of the greatest gifts of the EA fellowship. Helpful Concept # 12 tells us that, “Part of the beauty and wonder of the EA program is that at meetings we can say anything and know it stays there. Anything we hear at a meeting, on the telephone, or from another member is confidential and is not to be repeated to anyone—EA members, mates, families, relatives or friends.”

Tradition #12 tells us that, “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

And Concept #3 points out, “We respect anonymity, no questions are asked. We aim for an atmosphere of love and acceptance. We do not care who you are or what you have done. You are welcome.”

These principles are essential for fostering an atmosphere of trust and openness at our meetings. By adhering to these statements, we allow members to express their true feelings without the worry that someone outside the program may find out something we don't choose to share outside an EA meeting.

This does not rule out telling others that we are part of the EA program *if we choose to. That is a personal decision that we alone can make.* If we see someone hurting and believe that the EA program might be of help to them, we may choose to tell them that we are a part of a group—or we may simply tell them that we know about the EA program and want to share that information, keeping our membership private.

Anonymity and confidentiality do not mean that the program is a *secret*. It means we alone have the choice to share our involvement in the EA fellowship with others, free of the fear that someone else may ‘out’ us without our permission.

Still, we must balance confidentiality with concerns about safety. **The safety of EA members is our top priority.** Healthy conversation is only possible when people feel safe from abuse and don't witness violent language or threats. For this reason, we prohibit threats of violence in any version of an EA gathering or meeting. Threats include statements made with the intent to harass, instill fear, or inflict

physical harm on another person, or to inflict physical harm upon yourself.

Also, if someone shares such a threat of harm to themselves or others, the program allows us to take action if we choose. Our principles of anonymity and confidentiality do not prevent EA members from reporting such threats to the appropriate authorities. When in doubt, call 911.

The decision whether or not to report information that may pose a threat to public safety is a personal one that will be left to individual EA members and their Higher Power. Someone in such a situation where they are wondering about whether or not to report something may also choose to consult a sponsor or fifth-step person, if available.

This careful, mindful approach to deciding whether or not to report a credible threat of harm allows us to put into practice several of the 12 Principles of the EA program. These include honesty; hope; faith; courage; integrity; justice and service.