

‘WHY DO WE DONATE TO NAWS AS WELL AS THE EDM?’

There are both practical and spiritual reasons why we should embrace the practice of the 7th tradition on as wide a basis as possible.

The practical reasons are straightforward and wide ranging. There is only one Narcotics Anonymous fellowship. We only form Area, Regional and Zonal service structures to better practically fulfil our primary purpose. They form parts of a cohesive whole not separate organisations.

NA World Services was formed, and has evolved over the years, to carry our message to addicts the world over, in a form appropriate to their language and culture, whilst maintaining the clarity of the original message. To achieve this aim we need a single point of accountability to ensure continuity and equality among NA communities around the world. Having a central point of contact, with the responsibility of representing the whole fellowship, has many advantages. Some of these include our status at the United Nations as a Non Government Organisation and the recent trip to China at the invitation of the Chinese government. As well as providing a connection between NA and the rest of society NAWS also provides a host of services to the fellowship on an internal level. The range of these is vast, including literature, service material, events and fellowship development and support. A great deal of time and effort is also spent on working out the areas that we need to focus on in order to grow, enabling all of us to take an active part in the process of creating a plan for the future. I think it's worth pointing out that when we donate money to NAWS we aren't just funding the World Service Office. We are also supporting the work of experienced addicts around the world who serve on the world board and participate in numerous workgroups.

The European Delegates Meeting was never intended, nor is it capable of, being an alternative to the world service structure. In no way does it have the financial or personal resources to carry out any of the necessary tasks. It functions primarily as a zonal forum where fellowships linked by geography and language share their experience and facilitate local fellowship development work. It is clear that the EDM can work with NAWS to better fulfil our primary purpose, but also that it doesn't have the resources or the will to take over the extensive tasks delegated to them and the 48 special workers at the WSO.

Any discussion over where to donate our excess funds is, of course, fundamentally influenced by the 7th tradition. The concepts of passing on money freely and being financially responsible are ones that were unfamiliar to many of us until we joined NA. As our involvement in service progresses we come to realise that we alone manage NA funds. Budgetary decisions are there for us to be involved with if we choose. By doing so we gain confidence in our trusted servants and the work of World Services. It would seem to me that our recoveries can only be enhanced when we enlarge our horizons and believe we can contribute to the fellowship as a whole and not just our small corner of it. We have a choice, but before we make it shouldn't we be sure we are acting in the best interest of the whole fellowship?

There has been some discussion around the amount of money we contribute via literature sales. Here we again face a choice – how do we want our fellowship to be funded? This is a long term decision that revolves around the fundamental principles of this program and its traditions. The stated aim of NAWS is to sell literature at cost and at comparatively equal prices around the world. Do we want unity within our fellowship where the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using? Do we believe that we have one primary purpose and that the funding of the work to achieve it is our responsibility? Do we want to raise funds by selling literature at a profit and staging events or would we prefer to simply donate freely the money needed to carry out the tasks required to help our fellowship to grow? To me the principle is clear. By donating we take the burden off the shoulders of newcomers, both individuals and communities, whilst enabling everyone to still contribute according to their means.

We have the means to donate money, as our budgetary excess demonstrates, and I can see no reason why we should have to choose between two radically different service bodies when we make a significant contribution to them both. We don't choose between service bodies within our own Areas and Region so why should we do it outside our Region?

We already have a Regional policy of donating £50 per Region to both NAWS and the EDM. We are now in a position to increase this amount if we choose. An open and fearless discussion of all the issues surrounding the subject of donations can only help us to make a decision that we can have confidence in for years to come.