

# 2008 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE POLICY MOTIONS

Page 1 of 4

3. MOTION to amend the text on pp. 83-84 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*, "Anonymity." New text is underlined and in bold, strikethrough text indicates deletion. (Unanimous)

## ***Anonymity***

The experience of our groups suggests that the principle of anonymity—summed up in Tradition Twelve as "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions"—has three elements: There is anonymity as it applies outside Al-Anon/~~Alateen~~, governing our contacts with ~~non-members and organizations~~, **the general public, the media, and professionals**; anonymity within the fellowship; and anonymity as it contributes to our personal growth.

## ***Anonymity Outside Al-Anon/~~Alateen~~***

### **Anonymity and the General Public**

**When dealing with the general public it is important to use discretion in revealing one's Al-Anon/Alateen membership. In settings where there is no media involved (health fairs, speaking to community groups or schools, etc.), members are free to use their full names, if they are comfortable doing so.**

### **Anonymity and the Media**

Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline: "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV." **It is Al-Anon/Alateen policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media.** This gives potential members confidence that their identity will not be revealed when they join Al-Anon. Also, ~~p~~**Personal anonymity in the media** at the public level guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon/Alateen member who may be tempted to seek public recognition.

When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon/Alateen member at the level of ~~press, radio, TV or films~~ **in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet, or other evolving public media, members** use only **their** first names **and last initial** or pseudonyms. **Members can also speak without identifying themselves or sign articles "Anonymous."**

**Photographs, video, film, or Web postings in published or broadcast media should not reveal full face images of those identified as members.** In photographs for publication and in TV appearances faces should not be recognizable. ~~This may be achieved by back-to-camera or blurring of features in some way.~~

# 2008 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE POLICY MOTIONS

Page 2 of 4

**On any Web site accessible to the public, whether an AI-Anon site or not, members' full names and faces are not posted if they are identified as AI-Anon/Alateen members.**

## **Anonymity and Professionals**

It is, ~~however,~~ important to make AI-Anon/**Alateen** known through our public outreach information work with **the many types of** professionals who come into contact with families ~~still~~-suffering from the effects of alcoholism **someone else's drinking**. Such contacts, of course, make it necessary for the **When working with professionals**, AI-Anon and Alateen members ~~involved~~ **are more credible and effective to when they** give their full names **and contact information**. **While personal anonymity is not required in outreach to professionals, it is helpful to inform the professionals of the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in**

**AI-Anon/Alateen**. AI-Anon members also give their full names to interested doctors, spiritual leaders, school or industrial personnel.

## **Note:**

**Alateen members must comply with local laws and their Area Alateen requirements regarding personal anonymity in all public outreach work.**

## **Electronic Communication outside of AI-Anon**

**E-mail provides a quick and easy way to communicate the AI-Anon/Alateen message to the media and professionals. Members' business e-mail addresses should not be used for AI-Anon/Alateen outreach, as they could imply affiliation, and may not be confidential to the member.**

**Web-based communication, such as on-line audio/visual materials (e.g., Web casts or podcasts), social networking sites, and blogs, provides members with easy access to distribute information about AI-Anon/Alateen recovery to a large audience. In keeping with Tradition Eleven ("Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members."), members who use this type of communication outlet must maintain their personal anonymity and that of any AI-Anon/Alateen or A.A. member, as the Internet is a form of media.**

## **Anonymity Within AI-Anon/Alateen**

Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

## 2008 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE POLICY MOTIONS

Page 3 of 4

Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anons/Alateens because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence.

At open Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions, or workshops where nonmembers may be are present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is well to begin these ~~open such~~ meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity ~~at the public level~~ in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet and other electronic media.

If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published, ~~or broadcast,~~ or Web-posted reports of our meeting.

The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics, and our Tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities.

At any function that records its speakers, members need to be aware that some recorders have Web sites that are open to the public. If speakers use full names, their sharings including full names could be posted.

In Al-Anon/Alateen service positions ~~At the service level~~ (Group Representatives, District Representatives, Coordinators, World Service Conference members, etc.) it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication. However, anonymity and our Tradition of non-endorsement could be compromised in electronic communication with e-mail lists and methods of forwarding messages, as well as on public Web sites. Posting material originally meant for members only (such as printed flyers, reports, letters, e-mail messages, and newsletters) on Web sites could result in posting a member's full name, which violates the principle of anonymity.

## 2008 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE POLICY MOTIONS

Page 4 of 4

**Service communication via e-mail is expedient and efficient, but care and common sense must be taken in its use, particularly in forwarding messages. Use of blind copies protects members' anonymity. Members should select with care the e-mail address(es) they use to conduct AI-Anon/Alateen business. It is recommended not to use members' full names in them. Business e-mail addresses might not provide privacy and could imply affiliation.**

Letters (including the return address) to an AI-Anon or Alateen member should *never* have the name AI-Anon or Alateen on the envelope. **The WSO uses "AFG, Inc." on envelopes sent to members in order to maintain anonymity. Care should also be taken in the wording of e-mail subject lines, as the e-mail address may not be private.**

Letters **Submissions** to *The Forum* should give **include** full names, addresses and phone numbers. Material that is published will be signed any way the writer wishes: first name and initial, initials only, "Anonymous"—either with or without geographical location. **Because The Forum is a publication available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained.** Area Newsletter Editors— **Service arm publications** usually follow this procedure **if distributed outside the fellowship.**

### ***Anonymity in Our Personal Growth***

~~Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship.~~ **In AI-Anon/Alateen** ~~We~~ we share as equals, regardless of social, educational or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security each member is assured in AI-Anon/**Alateen**. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity. **Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship, which we respect whether the member is attending meetings, not attending meetings, or deceased.** (See "**Public Relations** Anonymity.")