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Trustee Line for February 2009

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From The Trustees

The subjects listed below are just a listing of themes that have been submitted by other Trustees. You may respond to any of them or start an entirely new subject

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Submit a response to the [Trustee Line](#) because of something you have read in this or any other issue.

Are we doing all we can regarding our primary purpose?

2/4/09 - 1:44 PM
Hello To All Trustees,

I am hoping everyone had a joyous and healthy New Year and Holiday Season.

There is an issue that dawned on me, that concerns me, and that can be rectified easily. I am a part of the issue and I did something about it, and so can you.

At the Portland Conference, we Trustees approved a Local Area Help Flyer! When I last counted only 18 areas have taken advantage of this flyer, while there is approximately 110 Areas listed. I am from Area 6 and I was one of the 92 areas that had NOT used the tool of the flyer. Shame on me!! Well with the click of a mouse and the typing of a phone number, now Area 6 has the Help Flyer and I assure you we will distribute and use them to the best of our ability.

What disturbs me is the very little use of the tools we are given. If "our primary purpose is to help the compulsive gambler who still suffers" what are we waiting for? I not looking for a particular areas reasons. I am just making an observation. And that is, I can do more! We can do more, as Trustees, as Inter-groups, and as Members!!!

My hats are off to the areas that printed and used and are still using the flyers. Because you truly walked the walk. I am also glad that Area 6 has now joined the ranks. And I know these simple flyers will help spread the word, and get the message out to those who need to see and hear it.

So, there are still 91 areas who have yet to submit their phone numbers to the website administrator, for publication. What are we waiting for? We meet twice a year to help the cg who still suffers, Let's do something so simple as to get our Help Numbers out there. It is our responsibility!!

The only reply needed to this post is to " Get Onboard" and use the tools WE have approved!!!

Thanks for letting me vent and lets use the Help Flyer. NOW!!!!!!

See you in Kansas City.

Yours in Recovery,

Richie S. - 1st Co-Chair BOT
Area 6 - South Florida

2/5/09 - 3:14PM
Richie -

Thanks for the reminder. I had looked at it once, didn't understand it, so moved onto another issue. I will follow through this time to be sure we are also using some of the tools that have been given to us.

Linda S - Trustee Area 3A - San Diego

2/5/09 - 11:21PM
Hello Everyone,

In reference to the Help is Available flyer. Our area printed the flyer, and the response has been worth the time and cost. For \$65.00 we had the flyer printed on heavy paper and distributed them to area locations. Library bulletin boards, Company Human Resources departments, Area Mental health offices to mention a few. Several calls to our local phone number has resulted and new members attending meetings. This is a tool that works. I also suggest you use it.

Thanks
Gary G. - Area 6C - Greensboro/Winston-Salem NC Area

2/6/09 - 9:18PM
To David M.

Thank you for your assistance in helping us to get our "help" flyer ready to go. Our PR Chair, our Webmaster and even our Literature Chair are all standing by to get this rolling off the ground. It looks AWESOME. Thank you so much for your efforts - not only in helping us get this flyer done, but for ALL the work you do for the GA Program.

Linda S - Trustee Area 3A, San Diego

P.S. I am anxious to learn from other Trustees where they use this flyer - thanks to Gary for his suggestions. I learned something!

2/7/09 - 2:03 PM
Richie:

My hat's off to you even though I don't wear one. You, me and others who are using the local area help flyer are walking the walk.

I hope in KC that the BOT passes agenda item 29 thus eliminating attraction rather than promotion finally ending all confusion over the matter. The revised unity step 11 would now read: Our public relations policy is based on always maintaining personal anonymity at all media levels.

I'm wishing everyone a Happy Gambling Free New Year and look forward to seeing everyone in KC.

Ronny W. - Area 17 - Current Trustee

PS: I hope everyone can try to get the 888-424-3577 number on billboards in your areas!

Thoughts for the New Year

2/5/09 - 4:56 PM
To my Brothers and Sisters,

This is the time of the year to enjoy the peace and serenity with ourselves, the world and the loving and caring brothers and sisters within our wonderful fellowship called Gamblers Anonymous. Our program tells us to give thanks for all we have and not look for the things that we want or need. To many things in this world are out of reach, therefore look at the things that we can be thankful for in our lifetime.

I am looking forward to the next conference in Kansas City and renewing many old friendships besides making new ones. There is a lot of work to do in order to keep our fellowship strong and moving forward to even a more spiritual level of trust and understanding.

Happy New Year and joy to all and have a safe and healthy holiday season.
Arnie B. - A grateful brother from Area 8

Attraction vs. Promotion - Time for some clarity on agenda item 29

2/8/09 - 4:56 PM

Ron W's posting about his item 29 in the category of the help flyers just above brought me to write this. Let me get this out of the way right now. I am 100% against his item to reframe Unity Step 11. First of all, I believe it would take an act of God for the Board of Trustees to come up with a two-thirds vote in 2 consecutive meetings to change any of the Steps, but I want to clear up something that is so completely misunderstood by so many of our members.

◆Attraction rather than Promotion◆ is not about ◆Attraction rather than Advertising◆. It is about letting people know what we do rather than making statements of how we can fix things for compulsive gamblers or how terrific we are at what we do. It is not about making an interpretation of the Step just by using the headline.

It is about reading what is the explanation of the Step in the Red Book, which states:

◆Gamblers Anonymous does not compare itself to any other group, nor does it boast of its accomplishments and abilities to the public. However, Gamblers Anonymous does make itself available to anyone interested in the Fellowship or in the gambling problem.

In order to make the Fellowship visible, Gamblers Anonymous informs and educates the public about the problem of compulsive gambling and about the Fellowship itself. Personal stories of members in newspapers, magazines, on radio and television, as well as spot announcements all help to spread an awareness of Gamblers Anonymous. The Fellowship does not glorify the name of Gamblers Anonymous or its merits as a group rather, it works to encourage compulsive gamblers attend the Fellowship's meetings.

Personal publicity is always shunned, and anonymity is carefully preserved because the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous is more important than any one member. By maintaining this policy, any problems that accrue to an individual member cannot harm the Fellowship. Similarly, any achievements attained by individuals working in the program, benefit the group as a whole. This step is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place within the Fellowship's public relations program.

There is a need to present to the public an insight to the problem of compulsive gambling, its effects and the program of recovery offered by the Gamblers Anonymous Fellowship. This can be accomplished with respect and dignity. In the meaning of this Unity Step it is not breaking anonymity if we choose to relate to family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. that we are member of Gamblers Anonymous.

The Fellowship does not boast about our accomplishments or beat the drum for new members. We do not promote the name of Gamblers Anonymous.◆

There is nothing in this step that doesn't permit us to advertise, but it does tell us how not to advertise about our accomplishments.

The Guidance Code, Article III ◆ Objects, Section 1 states:

The specific and primary purposes for which this Fellowship is formed are as follows:

- 1) ◆ To contact compulsive gamblers no matter where they may be and help them overcome a gambling problem.
- 2) ◆ To carry the message of Gamblers Anonymous to the compulsive gambler who still suffers, through the medium of personal contact, telephone, mail, newspapers, films, radio, television, houses of worship, charitable organizations, service clubs, and by whatever dignified method that is approved by the Board of Trustees within the framework of the Unity Program.
- 3) ◆ To distribute Gamblers Anonymous literature to compulsive gamblers and to any person, organization or institution which desires some.
- 4) ◆ To encourage interest and knowledge of the activities and program of Gamblers Anonymous with the peace officers, educational institutions, penal institutions, judges, probation officers, parole officers, doctors, newspapers, motion picture companies, radio broadcasting companies, television broadcasting companies, houses of worship, charitable organizations and service clubs of the world.

At the Irvine ◆03 Trustee meeting, the Trustees voted in favor of item 40, which states: Free billboard, television, radio or newspaper advertising, provided as a public service announcement, with the official public relations slogan of GA: ◆If you have a gambling problem or know of someone that does, contact Gamblers Anonymous◆ or ◆If gambling is creating problems in your life, Gamblers Anonymous can help◆ along with local Intergroup information is acceptable and not considered a violation of Unity Step 7 or 11.

Why after 6 years are we still not getting this concept? The reason is simple. Many members feel that advertising is promotion and therefore not allowed. To those who stand behind that thinking and are so resolute about not wanting to understand what they are objecting to, I say step aside and let the program do its thing. We have confirmation from the Guidance Code, the Red Book and the Board of Trustees.

This means that the Trustees must be heard in their local areas about how tying advertising with promotion is incorrect and entirely out of order, and speaks to personal agendas instead of what the group conscience and our rudimentary objectives are. The Trustees that run into these problems should come armed with this information to stop such thinking in its tracks. If that still doesn't work, then maybe we need to add something to the Guidance Code in Quebec in the Fall that gives the clarification that is so sorely lacking for those who are unwilling to understand the facts.

In a P.S. to Ron W♦I would like to see his item withdrawn in favor of something that deals with the specifics of what problems exist regarding the misconceptions of the word promotion in Unity Step 11. The Step should remain as it is and is needed to stop the real meaning behind attraction rather than promotion.

David M. - Area 12 - New Jersey

2/8/09 - 12:52 PM

Fellow Trustees -

I thought that our new Public Relations pamphlet - presented by Matt H at our Houston conference - for its second vote - passed 89 - 2 - says it all very concisely and succinctly:

"What is the difference between attraction and promotion?" It is attraction when we tell the community why and who we are, what we do, how we do it and when and where we are available, if and when help is needed. Conversely, it is promotion when we BOAST about the successes of an individual or the program as a whole. We must let the way we lead our lives be the example of how the program works without "beating our chest" about it.

I have quoted this paragraph; I have referred members to the pamphlet; and quite frankly, in my opinion, I don't believe anything further is necessary. It says it all.

With faith in the Fellowship

Linda S - Trustee - Area 3 A, San Diego

2/11/09 - 1:04 PM

Dear Trustee Line,

I writing to respond to David M.s response to Ronny W. regarding many people in our membership, including many Trustees that do not understand the differences between Attraction rather than Promotion. I think, as David pointed out, that everything is very clear in our literature.

I probably do more complaining about our membership NOT reading and understanding our literature, than most things I talk about. IF everyone who is involved, or is going to get involved in our fellowship at any Trusted Servant position would read the literature, they'd have a much clearer understanding of everything.

The only thing I didn't understand about David's response was that he said he's seen this for about 6 years now. I know he's in the program over 19 years, and has been involved for much of that time, and am surprised that he's ONLY heard about this for 6 years.

This has been a subject that's been misconstrued for as long as I've been in the program, which is over 37 and a half years. I was involved from my 3rd week into the program, and started reading all of the literature, so I wouldn't do anything wrong, or against the program. I also (To this day) refer back to our literature whenever I have a question about something that I'm not 100% sure about. And I also call our Chairpeople of our Board of Trustees, and the Board of Regents when I am in doubt about something. (And/or I check with my Sponsor)

Sorry I got carried away on my explanation on this, but I just feel that if our membership would check into our written materials BEFORE using their own opinions of what they think certain items mean to them, there would be much less confusion at the local levels, and at the Trustee level of involvement in the program.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in Kansas City.

Sincerely,

Howie C. - Area 3 - Las Vegas, NV.

2/12/09 - 5:56 PM

Hello everyone,

I am witting in response to the Attraction vs. Promotion controversy that seems to continue on in GA. This was one of the major road blocks I came upon in doing public relations work in my area and is the main reason I authored the How to Public Relations Pamphlet that will be soon sent to all trustees with the most recent confidential trustee listing. I was flattered too see this piece of literature quoted on the trustee line by Linda S. I'm happy someone read it and I believe it is very clear in defining the differences between Attraction and Promotion. I can't believe there is anyone out there that doesn't get the concept yet!!!! Our primary purpose is to carry the message of hope that Gamblers Anonymous offers to the compulsive gambler who still suffers no matter where they may be. OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE!!!!!! that means first and foremost Let's stop trying to change the steps and just do our jobs as trustees and inform the people in our areas of the available literature which can put this issue to rest.

I am not sure where it is written, I believe in the Guidance Code, but I know I read it somewhere that the Board of Trustees is to act as Guardians of Twelve Steps of Recovery and Unity. I believe in the deepest depths of my heart that if we do all that we can to carry the message many lives can be saved. There is a lot of old ideas from some old timers in GA that have to be smashed. We as an international organization should be out there using all the resources possible to carry our message to those suffering in this horrific illness. We should be getting the GA helps number out there, after all we spent so much money getting it up and running. I envision a future where the Gamblers Anonymous name becomes a household name that people know they turn to when gambling has affected their life or the life of someone they love. We, the Board of Trustees, have to be the ones to set the example and blaze the trail. I'm not sure what conference it was brought up at, but I remember hearing someone talking about hiring a public relations firm to help get out press releases to get the 888 number out there. I think this is a great idea but only the tip of the iceberg. I believe we should have a television commercial and radio spots available, as well as be using the local area helps flyer. These are just a few of the ideas that rattle around in my head there are many more. So lets get off our derrieres, get moving fulfilling our primary purpose and get past this old thinking that we can't advertise GA.

Your brother in recovery and fellowship,
Matt H. - Area 16 Trustee - Upstate NY
Public Relations Chairperson

2/14/09 - 4:15 PM

Trusted Servants of Gamblers Anonymous,

Over the years our Fellowship has not taken advantage of many media outlets, in particular, the medium of television and the public service announcements they can provide at no cost to worthwhile causes.

Attraction is providing information and awareness via media outlets of our primary purpose which is simply stated in Unity Step Five which is to carry the message of hope to those compulsive gamblers still in the grip of a compulsive illness and who are knowingly or unknowingly destroying their lives and the lives of their families and friends.

The fellowship can accomplish this outreach while adhering to the principle of anonymity and honoring attraction versus promotion at the levels of press, radio, films, and television.

Maintaining our anonymity is simple. We do not divulge our identity by using last names or by appearing full face and identifiable to those viewers who may be watching.

To reject personal publicity for ourselves is an exercise in humility which places principles before personalities. Some members with good intentions have violated the principle of anonymity by allowing last names to be publicized or their pictures printed in newspaper stories. This type of ego-driven ignoring of the principle of anonymity is defended many times by a member stating I only wanted to do good, but many times what looks good for the moment is the enemy of what is best for the unity of the fellowship.

The dictionary defines "attraction" in single words as, Draw, Appeal, Lure, Magnetism, and attracting or being attracted. The dictionary defines "promotion" in single words as, Advertise, Push, Market, Beat the drum for, Furtherance, Advancement. There seems to be a thin line between attraction and promotion, but if we approach our outreach with anonymity and the importance of anonymity, then our fellowship will be well-served..

I know David M. Trustee from Area 12, New Jersey has no interest in applause or acknowledgement of his unselfish service to the Fellowship of Gamblers Anonymous, but I want to applaud his principled description of what is attraction versus promotion and his defense of the integrity of the recovery and unity steps as they are written and hopefully not to his chagrin, I wholeheartedly agree with his latest submission to the Trustee Line. I believe

that all GA members, when they disagree on issues, can be agreeable in all communication they have on any issues they believe important to the welfare of Gamblers Anonymous.

There was a submission to the trustee line from Matt H. Area 16, Upstate New York that brought more clarity and insight to this subject. Matt H. has the type of energy, intensity, and leadership qualities that could inspire many other members to get involved and be of service to our life- saving fellowship. Matt stated in his submission that "old members with old ideas" have to be smashed. That tone is not appropriate to unity and respect for all members-- new like Matt or old--like me. There is something to be said about the "elder statesmen" among us! Recovery is the process of change and personal growth, and I forgive Matt for his overlooking this fact.

Yours in Recovery and Unity,
George W., Past Trustee, New Jersey Now in Area 16, Watertown, New York

2/23/09 - 4:08 PM
Hello everyone,

I was reading the latest additions to the February Trustee line, when I read in George W.'s submission that Matt H., from Area 16, stated in his submission that old members with old ideas have to be smashed.

It hit me when I saw that and I could not believe it. First thing that went through my mind was how could Matt had written such a bold statement ! Then, I said to myself it is surely taken out of context because the way I know Matt, he would not have written anything like that. So I went back to Matt's submission to confirm my thinking and saw something quite different from what was reported by George.

What Matt really wrote is "There is a lot of old ideas from some old timers in GA that have to be smashed." Now, maybe it is just me, maybe French being my primary language, my understanding of the English language is not up to par, but what George stated and what Matt wrote appear to be two very different things.

There is, in my opinion, a world of difference between "old members with old ideas have to be smashed" and "there is a lot of old ideas from some old timers in GA that have to be smashed." Will all the readers go back to Matt's submission and verify what was really written? I'm afraid not. Will some readers merely conclude that Matt is way out of line and shows no respect for older members? I'm afraid yes and this is not fair because this is not the real situation.

In all fairness to Matt and anyone else for that matter, I would appreciate, in the future, that if one quotes something from another post, one would quote it verbatim and not the way it hits one.

Hope to see you all in Kansas City.

André G. - Trustee, Area 5B - French Quebec