

## Appendix A:

# THE TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS OF EDA

## The Twelve Steps of EDA<sup>1</sup>

(also known as the “Keep It Simple” or “Long Form”)

1. **We admitted we were powerless over our eating disorders—that our lives had become unmanageable.** We finally had to admit that what we were doing wasn't working.
2. **Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.** We started to believe that we could get better, and that there was a fundamental healing power upon which we could rely for recovery.
3. **Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.**<sup>2</sup> We decided to trust that, as we let go of rigidity, we would not fall. As we took (and continue to take) careful risks, our trust grew—in God, in ourselves, and in others.

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<sup>2</sup> “God” in EDA literature can mean the Deity, a deity, a spiritual entity of one's own understanding (a Higher Power), or a non-spiritual conception (a higher purpose). Reliance on any of these conceptions confers a perspective that transcends our immediate physical, social, and emotional circumstances and allows us to “keep calm and carry on” with what really matters.

4. **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** We looked at why we had gotten stuck, so we would be less likely to get stuck again. We looked at our fears and why we were afraid, our lies and why we had told them, our shame and guilt and why we had them. (This Step is the searchlight that reveals the blockages in our connection to God.)
5. **Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.** We shared our shortcomings. We held ourselves accountable to others for our past thoughts and actions, and discussed what we ought to have thought and done instead. This established our authority as responsible people; we began to feel like we belonged to the human race. (This Step is the bulldozer that clears the blockages in our connection to God.)
6. **Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.** We began to accept ourselves as we really were and take responsibility for our actions. We realized we couldn't "fix" ourselves. We had to be patient and focus on our efforts instead of results. We realized that the results were not ours to control.
7. **Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.** We asked God to help us accept our imperfect efforts. We made a conscious effort to take care of our own basic needs, so we could be of better service to God and those around us. Character-building exercises helped us build strength from weakness. We began to notice what we were doing right. As we did so, the "right" things began to increase.

- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.** We made a list of people we had treated badly, no matter how they treated us. We accepted responsibility for our part and made an effort to forgive them for their part.
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.** After counsel with a sponsor, or an EDA (or other Twelve-Step group member who has worked the Twelve Steps), we went to the people we had injured and admitted our fault and regret. Our statements were simple, sincere, and without blame. We set right the wrongs as best we could and expected nothing in return. Accountability set us free.
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.** We continued (and continue) to listen to our conscience. When troubled, we get honest, make amends, and change our thinking or behavior. We continue to notice what we do right, and we are grateful when engaged in right thinking and positive action.
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood God*, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.** We earnestly and consciously seek to understand and to do whatever will best serve our God or higher purpose every day. When we take care of our basic needs and place ourselves in service to our Higher Power or higher purpose, we gain the peace and perspective needed for recovery.

- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening<sup>3</sup> as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with eating disorders, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.** If we have been patient and persistent in working these Steps, we have experienced a transformation that enables us to live at peace with ourselves and the world around us. We consciously bring our new way of thinking into everything we do, for it is a pattern for living that works in all contexts. We readily share our experience, strength, and hope with those who suffer with eating disorders as we once did, glad that even our worst experiences can now serve some good purpose. Carrying the message of recovery reinforces gratitude, solidifies new habits of thought and action, and fills us with purpose and joy.

<sup>3</sup> The term “spiritual awakening” can refer to an event—a vital spiritual experience—or to a gradual change. Those of us who are atheists also experience a transformation, enabling us to place service before selfishness.

## The Twelve Traditions of EDA<sup>4</sup>

- 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon EDA unity. Eating Disorders Anonymous is a “we” program.** United we stand; divided we fall. EDA groups are effective in carrying the message of recovery to individual EDA members because we are united in our commitment to our common purpose, consistent in our use of the Twelve-Step program of recovery, and allied in adhering to our common Traditions. Without the support of EDA, many would not have found recovery at all, and many more would have died. We want the hand of fellowship and support to be there whenever anyone needs it.
- 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God<sup>5</sup> as God may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.** When making decisions that affect an EDA group or EDA as a whole, EDA’s servant leaders use a democratic process called

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a group conscience. In a group conscience, each participant consults his or her own conscience and votes as he or she thinks will best serve EDA's primary purpose: to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

3. **The only requirement for EDA membership is a desire to recover from an eating disorder.** To deny EDA membership to anyone could be to pronounce their death sentence. Hence, the only prerequisite for EDA membership is the individual's desire for recovery. We never turn anyone away who is trying to recover from an eating disorder.
4. **Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or EDA as a whole.** Each EDA group manages its own affairs, but every group is part of the EDA fellowship. Each group must be careful to not cause harm to EDA as a whole. Thus, special consideration must be taken in matters beyond the scope of the immediate group. We work together, while remaining separate.
5. **Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message of recovery to others with eating disorders.** We freely give away what others have given to us. People struggling with eating disorders need hope to be able to make any progress in recovery. EDA members strengthen and build recovery by sharing their experience, strength, and hope with others who still suffer. Each EDA group serves as a channel for the message of recovery, helping newcomers and “old-timers” alike.

6. **An EDA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the EDA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.** To involve our fellowship in issues outside the direct scope of our primary purpose is to distract us from carrying the EDA message to those who still suffer. To best serve our primary purpose, we hold no affiliation to external organizations or activities.
7. **Every EDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.** EDA subsists solely on voluntary donations from its members. Financial contributions from outside our fellowship would distract from our primary purpose and undermine group autonomy. Each EDA group is responsible for its own expenses, while carrying a prudent reserve.
8. **EDA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.** We do not give or receive payment for Twelve-Step work. While we support EDA members in their individual pursuit of professional help, we are not a professional organization. EDA employs workers when necessary to maintain the essential functions that support our fellowship.
9. **EDA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.** The EDA fellowship is grounded in guidance based on experience. We avoid giving directions or ultimatums lest we risk defiance and competition between members and groups. Since our experience proves that service work is essential for

recovery, we extend opportunities for our members to be of service within the EDA fellowship.

10. **EDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the EDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.** EDA does not take sides in any debate. A foundation of neutrality and acceptance allows us to remain focused entirely on our primary purpose.
11. **Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, film, and web.** Our fellowship gains membership by demonstrating EDA principles in our daily lives and by sharing our message of recovery within our groups. We focus on the EDA program rather than on individual members. Each member serves as an active guardian of our fellowship.
12. **Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.** Our fellowship is grounded on a foundation of tolerance and love. Personal distinction does not interest us. We gather with the single goal of carrying the EDA message of recovery, irrespective of our personal opinions. True humility is achieved through the principle of anonymous service. We place priority on principles, not personalities.