

(Excerpts from Delegate's 2006 WSC Information package...)

INTRODUCTION TO KNOWLEDGE-BASED DECISION-MAKING (KBDM)

In the traditional way of doing business, we tend to deliberate a motion without the understanding of the why behind it that led to the motion. In the traditional way, when we had a discussion it was with an end in mind. For example, a motion was presented -we chose our position whether pro or con and each side would gather evidence to support their particular position - so the discussion always took place with the intended end in mind - either for or against. In other words we operated out of reaction not proaction. With our knowledge based governance value system, we now enter into a dialogue on a particular subject with an open mind rather than a closed mind. In other words, we engage in "open dialogue before deliberation or decision making".

Here are some points to remember in considering this new way of thinking and operating:

- This knowledge-based model is focused on information and insight.
- Collaboration and cooperation are the fundamental driving forces in getting things done.
- Knowledge-based culture is sensitive to different thinking and working styles.
- It values diversity in thinking and is committed to getting full advantage from different perspectives.
- Who makes the decision is not as important as the decision being made.
- Instead of reacting to what is, we are creating what will be.

Some of the benefits of knowledge based decision making are:

- Group members are more likely to support decisions made.
- Group effort is more likely to yield better results.
- Participants become an integral part of the process and more voices are heard as solutions are generated.
- There is recognition that responsibility for action lies with everyone.
- People tend to think and act for the greater organizational good.
- Negativity is diffused.

Knowledge-based Decision-making has four essential elements:

- Based on a philosophy of open communication between leadership and membership
- Dialogue before deliberation
- Common access to all information for all involved in making a decision
- Exists in a culture of trust

KBDM Overview

Four essential elements for this process:

1. Open Communication between leadership and membership:

"Talk to each other, and reason things out", is a phrase we hear at the closing of every Al-Anon meeting. Wiser words were probably never spoken. Isn't this what our Chart "The paths to Group Conscience" is all about?

2. Dialogue before Deliberation:

This is the opposite of *Robert's Rules*, This allows us to discuss the information, questions and concerns before we construct the motion. Often the discussion reveals we really don't even need a motion which makes me think all we really need many times is to have the **discussion**.

3. All decision makers will have common access to full information:

This is often one of the most confusing elements. Sometimes all members think they should have access to all information, whether they are part of the decision making body or not and sometimes you might think everyone needs it too.

Concept 4 tells us, "Participation is the Key to Harmony". This concept does not say everyone is invited to participate. We are invited to participate if it is in our role as part of the decision making body. In your role as part of this Decision making body, you do need information so that you can be better prepared to be a part of the discussions here. We have worked extra hard to ensure this happened. With that comes **trust**. Trust that this information will be used by you to **prepare yourself for dialogue**.

Following the full discussions we have here at Conference and when a decision has been made, it is important that we all **recognize and support the Group Conscience**, what ever it is, whether we agree with it or not. It is the collected voice of at least two-thirds of those present. How we vote as individuals, is autonomous and should remain in this room. We all must remember, **our Higher Power is here** at Conference and present in all of the final decisions - whether we agree with them or not.

4. We exist in a Culture of Trust:

As Al-Anon members, we place a great value on Trust. It is a principle that we experience with our first Al-Anon service.

We learn to have a firm belief that each of us would never, knowingly, do anything to hurt Al-Anon - we begin to rely on others and to be reliable, we learn to be truthful and rely on the truth from each other. It is when we understand **how our spiritual principles are applied to the decision making process that we experience the element of trust in the concept of substantial unanimity** or "choosing from the hat".

Many times, we simply need more information for the understanding that lets us lighten our load and experience trust.

Last year we heard the phrase, "**Presume Goodwill**". I want to say it often so it stays at the top of my mind.