

The Spirit of Rotation in Treatment Work

The following leaflet regarding the “Spirit of Rotation” with respect to treatment work was drafted by the **Area 48 Treatment Committee**. The following are some references and some suggested guidelines for applying the “Spirit of Rotation” to treatment work.

Spirit of Rotation- Growing Through Letting Go

The “Spirit of Rotation” is important at all levels of AA, at the group level, district level, area level and beyond. Whether considering a coffee making position at the group level, a district level position, a commitment to taking a meeting into a facility, answering phones for the central office or just about any service in AA- it would be wise to consider sticking to time limits. Rotation is the main method we have to prevent power, prestige, and personal recognition from distorting our best intentions. It puts a “check valve” on our intentions. Putting limits on our service time gives the newcomer a chance to serve. Ideally, term limits should be determined by a group conscience (as expressed by a Loving God). In situations where the term limit is unclear, it is wise for the person taking on the commitment to discern beforehand what would be a wise term limit and stick to it. Learning to let go and let God gracefully really provides an opportunity for personal growth. Sometimes people need help to step down, but this benefits everyone, including the reluctant ex-servant. Rotation is practiced not to put somebody out of a job, but to ensure that the selfish ones do not hold on, and that all have an opportunity to serve. Furthermore, rotation also limits the time for those of us who serve to mess things up. Without the principle of rotation, responsibility for carrying the message would rest in the hands of just a handful of people, thus causing the Fellowship to become alienated from our Third Legacy of Service. It is the AA message that is important, not the messenger. It is the spirit of rotation that keeps our Fellowship alive!

(Strongly referenced from *Box 459, Oct-Nov 1983*)

"Traditionally, rotation ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in AA, are passed around for all to share...to step out of an AA office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth--a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity...rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no AA "status" at stake, we needn't compete for titles or praise--we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed".

(From *The AA Group* pamphlet)

Some *suggested* guidelines for knowing when it's time to pass on your treatment commitment:

1. **If you have had a relapse into drinking, you should give up any treatment facility commitment.** There can be a temptation to think that holding onto the commitment will help you get sober, however this does more harm than good. The bottom-line is you can't pass on what you don't have. Further, this can potentially lead to problems with the treatment facility which could lead to us not being able to bring any meetings in.
2. How long should you hold on to the treatment commitment? There are no hard and fast rules. Some districts have guidelines. In cases where there are no district guidelines, it is recommended to have in mind how long you will plan to hold to the commitment, and rotate out when your self-imposed time is up. You might discuss this with your sponsor/service sponsor or another AA member with experience in general service.
3. If you have held on to a treatment facility commitment long enough that you start to feel it is "your meeting", maybe it's time to "grow through letting go" and consider rotating out, training someone else to do it, and consider picking up a different service commitment.