



Group Conscience

Each SAL 12-Step group functions autonomously. Group members collectively take responsibility for the health, safety, and effectiveness of their meetings. If concerns arise regarding any aspect of group meetings, these concerns should be addressed in a Group Conscience. Every member of a group has the right to call for a Group Conscience.

For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern. (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 132)

A group conscience is led by the group moderator. Concerns affecting the group are laid out and respectfully discussed by members. This collective conscience provides us with the spiritual guidance we need to make wise decisions and reaffirm the quality and safety of our meetings. As in all 12-Step work, we individually seek to hear and heed God's will regarding the spiritual health of the meeting.

(SAL: Recovering Individuals, Healing Families, p. 305)

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) is where the 12-Steps originated from and the following information about a group conscience comes from their pamphlet:

Group conscience...the sharing of full information & individual points of view. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind. On sensitive issues, the group works slowly — discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision.

Before a vote is taken, it is essential that the members be given all facts relevant to the subject at hand. In many cases, a few members may be asked to look into the pros and cons of the issue and present them at the meeting. Arriving at an informed group conscience in big matters or small is a process that may take some time. But it is important that minority, or dissenting, views be heard along with those of the majority.

If someone disagrees with the decision...members have the right of appeal and can express their opinion, which members will consider before deciding whether to revote or proceed.

Everybody supports the final decision.

(Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work (P-24) explains on page 51.)

The Key 3 may meet together and discuss problems or concerns and decide whether to discuss items in a group conscience for a vote. A group conscience may be held during the “Announcements” portion and **SHOULD NOT** go into Step study time.

- If the group conscience needs to go beyond the “announcements” time (which is generally 5 min), please communicate when the group conscience will continue so all group members can plan to attend. Usually groups will hold these before or after their meeting to make it more convenient for all members to attend.

Examples of when to hold a Group Conscience:

- To decide the topic study for an upcoming week
- When Key 3 positions need to be filled or changed
- To discuss meeting issues or concerns
- To take a vote on anything that pertains to the entire group
- If someone misses a group conscience and requests another vote, the group can choose to do a revote.
- If any member of the group feels their meeting is not healthy, she can bring it to the Key 3 and request a group conscience be held to discuss healthy meetings and healthy boundaries.

Later, the group may decide that their decision did not produce the results they had hoped for. In that case, another group conscience may be needed.

Examples of a Group Conscience:

For instance, you are voting in a new moderator:

Discussion: Who is eligible, who is willing.

Nomination

Someone seconds

Group Vote

Majority Rules

Nomination Passes

Healthy Meeting Issue:

Presentation/Discussion of Issue

Resolution Discovery

Group Vote

Majority Rules

Resolution Passes