We learn when to speak the truth, and when silence is the wiser choice.

—Guiding Principles, Tradition Ten, "For Members"

Being in recovery can do wonders for our ability to communicate with those around us. For many of us, simply getting clean eliminates the need to sneak around, hide our motives and true intentions, and keep secrets. Learning to share honestly with our sponsor and other addicts helps us get more comfortable telling the truth to other people in our lives.

While some of us do still keep secrets or play our cards close to our chest, others of us might take it to another extreme and become chronic over-sharers. One addict shared, “I realized that even if my physician needed detailed information about my bowel movements, the other patients in the waiting room didn’t.”

Learning when to keep things to ourselves is personal to each of us, but Tradition Ten does offer us helpful guidance. The quotation above is a reminder that NA doesn’t express opinions on outside issues. As a Fellowship, our shared view is that our program works; we might not have Fellowship-wide agreement on much else. The willingness to refrain from taking or expressing a stance on an issue requires some discipline. With practice, we may find that we have greater harmony with others than we have when we say everything that comes to mind.

Still, there are times it is important to speak our mind. With effort and consideration, we can strike a good balance. A member wrote, “I saw a poster in my kid’s classroom that said, ‘THINK before you speak: is it true, helpful, important, necessary, and kind?’ I started practicing that in service meetings and found that I talked less but enjoyed the meetings quite a bit more.”

Good communication sometimes means keeping thoughts to myself. When it comes to knowing when to speak and when to remain silent, I will seek the wisdom to know the difference.